TWO BOYS IN THE TROPICS

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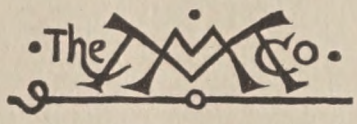
TWO BOYS IN THE TROPICS



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TORONTO

HUMMINGBIRD VISITING THE FLOWERS

TWO BOYS IN THE TROPICS

ELISA HALDEMAN FIGYELMESSY

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book was written during a long stay of the author in the tropics. Her husband, who was United States Consul to British Guiana for over twenty years, had exceptional opportunities for collecting the various animals and plants of the Colony. The anecdotes about the strange animal friends Loys and Halde had to play with are, therefore, authentic, and may prove of interest to other American boys who have not had the good fortune to visit that wonderland for children,—South America and the West Indies.

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TWO BOYS IN THE TROPICS

TWO BOYS IN THE TROPICS

CHAPTER I

THE START

LOYS and Halde were two American boys; that is, they were born in the United States. Did you ever think that boys born in Brazil, Mexico, and Canada are also Americans? Only *they* can be called Brazilians, Mexicans, or Canadians; but the people of the United States have no name of their own.

The two boys had been living with their grandparents at a beautiful old place in Pennsylvania, called Bywater, when their father's business called him to South America, and he decided to take his family along.

They had been very happy at Bywater. Two uncles and a kind aunt had taken them nutting, fishing, and to the circus. In summer they drove Mike, the old horse, about the green roads between the great wheat fields of the county; in winter they coasted all day down the snow-covered hills, and in the evening listened to stories which Auntie read to

them by the wood fire. But the boys no sooner heard of the journey than they were anxious to be off. They could think, for the present, of nothing but of sailing on a ship and of running about in gardens where oranges grow and where, perhaps, they might catch a wild monkey or a parrot.

It was a cold morning in January when the family left Bywater. Auntie buttoned on the boys' overcoats, though she could scarcely see to do it — Halde said the smoke from a passing locomotive had gotten into her eyes. Many kisses were given and taken, good-bys were said in many voices, and finally the boys climbed into the carriage, where their mother already sat in her corner, very quiet and very sad at leaving her dear people. Good wishes filled the air, there was a waving of handkerchiefs, and the old German gardener, hat in hand, made deep bows, his stiff gray hair looking as if it had been broken short by the wind.

At the station the children had just time to warm themselves when the train puffed up. "Now we are off," shouted both, as the whistle was heard.

How fast they went! Sometimes it seemed as if the fences and trees were rushing along outside; but when the boys turned their eyes into the car, they found it was themselves that were moving.

Soon they laid aside scarves and overcoats, and when their father, Mr. Francis, entered, Halde handed

him his mittens, saying, "Father, you can give them to some poor little boy."

"Why?"

"Because we shall soon be in the warm country, and I shall not need them."

Loys, who thought he knew much more on every subject than his younger brother, laughed, and replied, "We must get on the ship before we can reach the warm country, Halde."

"Yes, and it will be some time after that," added Mr. Francis.

"Then I think we had better eat a little cake, or we may be hungry."

Loys heartily agreed to this idea and opened a basket that Auntie had prepared for the trip. By and by, tired of looking out, the children leaned back on the soft cushions of the seat and were rocked to sleep by the motion of the car.

When they awoke, the train was moving slowly, and Mr. Francis said, "Here is Baltimore; put on your things; it is very cold."

What a change from the quiet of Bywater to the noise at the station: the shrill sound of whistles, passengers and porters hurrying about, baggage vans rumbling along, and the hackmen shouting and holding up their whips to attract attention.

Each driver appeared to want Mr. Francis to go with him, which Halde thought very kind. Taking

the nearest cab, the family soon arrived at the hotel, where supper and a good bed awaited them.

By next morning a deep snow had fallen. Sparkling masses hung on the bare trees, on the sign-boards, on the telegraph wires, and on the house tops. Mrs. Francis and the children sat at the parlor windows watching the scene. Merry schoolboys amused themselves pelting all who came in their way; and other boys, not so merry, were busy shovelling the pavements clean. People with blue noses and red eyes waded, slipped, and tumbled in all directions. A snow plough was tossing the white drifts before it like sea foam. Butcher carts, milk wagons, and bread wagons struggled in its wake, and a few sleighs drawn by restive horses plunged over the white hills and valleys of snow.

Mr. Francis had gone to see when the vessel would sail. By and by he returned, saying that they must take an early dinner and go on board at once.

At this news the children began to dance.

"I wish it was not so bitter cold," went on Mr. Francis, "or that we were already a week out in warmer weather. The cabin is very small."

"I wish we were three weeks out, and about stepping ashore at the end of our journey," said Mrs. Francis.

"I wish we were many, many days and weeks out, and had many yet to go. I want to climb the masts

and catch fish. Do not let us wait for dinner." It was Loys who spoke.

"I want to catch a whale, but I want to eat my dinner, too," chimed in Halde.

"You had better eat as much as possible while you can. I dare say you will be sick the first few days," prophesied their mother.

"Not until we get to the open sea," said Mr. Francis. "The bay is one hundred and sixty miles long, and I hear it is full of floating ice."

"Can we slide on it?" cried out both boys.

"Will the bay be dangerous?" asked their mother.

"There is a certain amount of danger everywhere. We must be willing to take our share, and meet it with courage when it comes."

"I would rather not meet it at all," smiled Mrs. Francis.

Not much dinner was eaten. The children were too excited and their mother too sad with the thoughts of leaving home. Mr. Francis alone had an appetite, but the boys gave him little peace, each moment saying: —

"Father, you must hurry, we will be left."

"Father, please do not eat any more."

"Mother, please help us with our overcoats; I am sure the ship will start without us."

"Oh, Father! I hope you do not intend to take dessert. I will give you some of my cakes when we get on board."

"Father eats as much as a big bear," pouted Halde.

"More than a bear," affirmed Loys.

"Well, Mother, get their coats. I am afraid they will be as glad to end their journey as to begin it."

In a few minutes they were ready and ran downstairs to see the baggage being loaded on a dray. The boxes intended for immediate use were marked *Cabin*. The others were to be put into the hold, which is not opened until the vessel reaches port. Loys, who heard his father explain this, begged him not to let the box of good things from Bywater get into the hold.

"You boys and the box had better go in the hold together, then we will have no more trouble until we arrive."

"Oh, no, Father! We promise to be very good and obedient," answered both.

"I hope so, otherwise you will fall overboard and the sharks will eat you, cake and all. As the children are so impatient, we had better walk; there is still plenty of time."

The boys, acting on this hint, were soon out of the front door, their father and mother following more slowly. "Now look your last at the streets and people; you will not see your own country for a long time."

"Poor boys! they do not yet know what the words, 'your own country,' mean."

"Home is where the heart is," answered Mr. Francis, cheerfully.

"But when the heart is divided, how then?"

Nothing more was said, and presently they turned into a smaller street, from where a view could be had of the harbor. Their vessel, the *Potomac*, lay by the wharf with the "blue Peter" flying at her masthead; this is a small flag, the signal for sailing. Carters were busy delivering cargo, and stevedores, the men who load ships, rolled barrels and jerked boxes within reach of the crane, a machine for lifting heavy weights. Its great iron hooks, like claws, grasped masses of freight, swung them over a hatchway, or square opening on deck, and lowered them into the hold, where other men stowed them away.

There were hogsheads of tobacco; tierces of hams; barrels of flour, pork, beef, peas; bags of beans, corn, cornmeal; cases of kerosene, lard, butter, canned fruits; boxes of clocks, chairs, shoes, slates, sewing machines; trusses of hay and bundles of brooms. The merchant who owned the *Potomac* was sending these things to be sold in South America.

In summer time cows, horses, and sheep are often carried, the pens being on deck; but a winter storm would wash the animals overboard. Sometimes the whole cargo is of staves, which are loaded at Norfolk, Virginia, and cut from the red and white oak forests of that State. Pitch pine and white

pine from Georgia and Florida are also taken, the wood of South America being only suitable for beams and the stronger parts of houses.

Mr. Francis pointed out these things to the boys as they walked along the wharf, and told them that the *Potomac* would bring back a cargo of sugar when she returned. Each country sends to the others what it does not need of its own produce and manufactures, and receives in return the surplus of other countries; this exchange is called commerce.

"What is a cargo?" asked Loys.

"The lading or load of a ship is the cargo, and the place where it is put is the hold. The roof of this hold is the deck. Sailing vessels are known by the number of masts they carry and the way the sails are stretched. Ships, barks, brigs, schooners, and sloops are among the larger craft. As for the smaller boats, they have different forms and names in every port."

"I thought everything with sails was a ship," said Halde.

"Is everything with wheels a carriage?"

Halde laughed. "It would be funny to call a cart a carriage."

"To a sailor it would sound just as funny to call a bark a ship. Not only the different vessels, but every sail, rope, and spar has a name of its own, and a man who wishes to be a sailor must spend some

THE PORT OF BALTIMORE

time at sea before he can know them all. Look at the *Potomac;* she is a bark. She has a foremast, a mainmast and a mizzenmast.

"The first two are rigged—that is, have the sails fastened to them—like those of a ship. They hang square on the yards, or crosspieces, as much sail being on one side as on the other. But the mizzenmast, or that nearest the rudder, has its sails all on one side, stretched from a boom or beam forming an L with the mast. Its large lower sail is called the spanker, perhaps because the wind makes it flap back and forth as a slipper sometimes does when children are naughty.

"Thus a bark is a vessel carrying three masts, two square-rigged, and one, the mizzenmast, schooner or side rigged. People now seldom travel on sailing vessels, but there is no direct line of steamers to the port where we are going."

CHAPTER II

ON THE BARK

A PLANK lay from the wharf to the vessel, by which the family reached the deck, where they were met by the first mate. To their questions he replied that the bark would not get off for at least two hours. "More cargo is expected, and the captain has not yet come aboard," he explained.

The boys were disappointed at the delay, but while their parents went to the cabin they amused themselves looking about.

The harbor was a pretty sight. Many ships stood wedged in the ice, their white sails spread to dry; their yards, decks, and rigging covered with sparkling snow, making them look like huge sugar toys just waiting to be eaten. People walked and skated on the solid water; steamers and ferry-boats came and went, crunching a passage which closed again as they passed. On the loose blocks sea-gulls floated and quarrelled over garbage, thrown from the galleys, circling in the air as they found a dainty morsel so that their greedy friends might not steal it away.

It was still bitter cold, and Mr. Francis soon called the children to come and warm themselves. A number of steep steps, enclosed by doors and a sliding top, led below, where another door opened on the cabin. This passage is called the companionway.

"You must come down backwards," said Mr. Francis, "so you can hold on when the bark is in motion."

The cabin was a space about three yards square, with six sleeping rooms, a pantry, and a bath-room surrounding it. Each sleeping room contained two shelves, placed one above the other with an upright rim in front to hold fast a mattress and pillows; these are beds. There was also a washstand in the corner, a few pegs on the partition, and a stool in each room. They found Mrs. Francis in one of the rooms, busy unpacking night-dresses and sea clothes.

The cabin was furnished with a stove, a table, some chairs, and a sofa, all screwed to the floor. Even the stovepipe had been fastened to the wall by wires.

"Why do they screw everything fast, Father?" asked Halde.

"So that the sea fairies cannot make them dance."

"How do sea fairies look?"

"They take the form of great waves, and their voices sound like the wind. Sometimes they make a terrible racket."

"Are they fond of dancing?"

"Very! and not satisfied with dancing alone, they take chairs, dishes, passengers, the sailors, the vessel itself, for partners; and everything goes spinning about as if mad."

"How very jolly that must be! Tell me more about them."

"Come!" broke in Loys. "Let us look at the pantry, perhaps they have put our cakes there."

Here the shelves were divided into boxes, the size of the ware that was kept in them; glasses and cups occupied holes in the shelves, jugs and mugs hung on hooks.

"I do not think these will get much of a dance," said Halde, looking around.

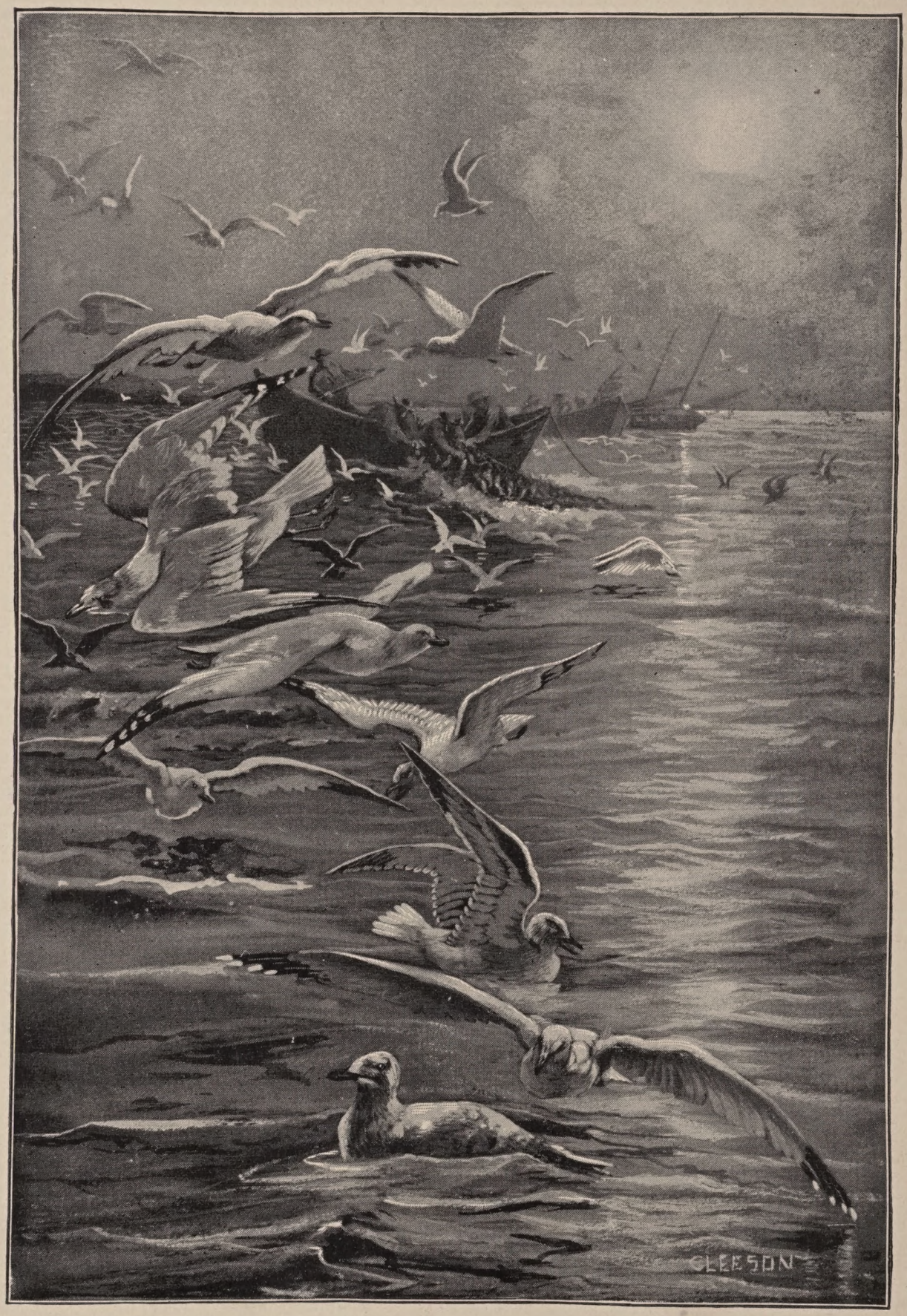
"Nonsense, Halde! There are no fairies either on land or on sea. Father was only joking, he meant the waves. I wonder grown people say such foolish things to children!"

"Because we are little," answered Halde, promptly; "but little people have sense, too."

"I don't think you have much," replied Loys, teasingly.

"Yes, I have; but when your own father tells you a thing, ought you not believe it?"

Just then the captain was heard in the cabin. The boys ran out to meet him, and Loys was spared an answer.



A Flock of Seagulls

Captain Stout was a short, thick man, with a round face, which, through the extreme heat and cold of his route, had become a vivid red. His eyes were blue and his hair and beard white, so he jokingly said he carried the American colors on his person. The captain wore a fine suit of black cloth, polished shoes, and a high hat. He was speaking to a man about paying off the stevedores, for the lading had been finished.

Behind him stood the pilot, tall and thin, with fur gloves, fur cap, and a large coat powdered over with frost. He bowed and said, "A cold night, sir," to every one present, not excepting Mrs. Francis.

"When do we start?" she asked.

"Just now, just now, just now!" answered the pilot, again bowing. Then, having warmed his hands, he rushed away.

Loys and Halde were obliged to hide in the pantry to laugh at this funny man. While they were there the whistle of a steam tug was heard, and Mr. Francis called them to come on deck to see the vessel leave the wharf.

And now the boys heard sea language for the first time. The cables attached to the wharf were cast off, sailors stood at various points in readiness, and the pilot on the upper deck shouted his orders: —

"Let her go! Port there! Port, can't you hear! There she goes! Bring a buffer, quick, a buffer!

Ease her! Starboard a little! Starboard, I say! Ease her! Back her! Let her go! Steady! Keep ste-a-a-a-dy!"

Backward and forward tramped the pilot, now on this side, now on that, waving his hands and making signs like the leader of an orchestra. A man in the middle of the ship and another at the stern repeated the strange terms so that every one could hear them.

The *Potomac* moved slowly from her moorings, not a bit affected by the hubbub on all sides. Presently a yell of dismay arose. Notwithstanding their care, her yards had gotten entangled in the rigging of a schooner lying near by and were being torn from the vessel.

What was noise before now became utter confusion. Every one talked, swore, and shouted. Tongues and legs ran races; finally brains and hands were put to work. Things went a little better, but it took time, and just as they were sheering off there was a crash on the other side. Some one exclaimed: "By thunder! There goes the cat-head smashed to bits."

Loys and Halde felt awfully sorry for the poor cat, until Mr. Francis told them that the cat-head is a short beam which projects from the side of a vessel, and to which the anchor is fastened when not in use.

At last the bark was free. A small steam-tug puffed up, took the cable that had been flung to her,

and started off, looking like an ant trying to carry away a loaf of bread.

Captain Stout now appeared with his sea clothes on; a rough coat much worn, a close-fitting cap, and a long meerschaum pipe. Having nothing to do while the pilot remained on board, he took his ease, chatted, and smoked.

"Well, we are off," said Mr. Francis, as he saw him.

"We might as well be lying at the wharf, for all the good it will do us."

"Why?"

"I hear that the ice in the bay is shifting at every turn of the tide. The channel can't be kept open, and nothing has left the capes for two days."

"A bad prospect!"

"Yes, Baltimore can't be depended on in winter. I have at times been fifteen days getting to sea from here. Now, at New York, you are out in a few hours."

"Fifteen days!" exclaimed Mrs. Francis, just coming up. "I expected to be in South America by that time."

The captain smiled. "That might happen, madam, but it's not likely. Twenty-two or three days is a good run for a sailing vessel. I have done it in less, and I have done it in more."

"What has been the shortest passage you ever made?"

"Thirteen days."

"And the longest?"

"Forty."

"Oh, my! I hope that will not be our fate."

The supper bell rang and they all went down. When they had eaten and returned, the *Potomac* was still picking her way among the shipping, guided by the little tug.

The lights alongshore were coming out like stars, one by one, and other stars seemed moving over the black waters of the bay. The harbor lay far behind; above, all was dark, as if the sky people had put out their fires and gone to bed. Sometimes a large ferry-boat filled with passengers came lumbering by, and in the distance a fleet of oyster smacks, drawn by a single tug, resembled a train of cars upon their winding track. These finally came near enough to hail, and the captain, curving his hands around his mouth, shouted:—

"How is the ice down below?"

"Bad!" was the short reply.

They soon found this to be true. A few miles farther the clear water ended. A roadway of broken ice could be seen on the line marked by the buoys, but all beyond had now the appearance of dim white fields. The plucky tug struggled along, frequently whistling to keep up her courage, but the blockade in front made it hard to get forward.

About nine o'clock a fine snow began falling. The pilot could not make out the lighthouse signals, which direct the vessels in their course. A safe place was found, the order was given to drop anchor, a lantern was hung in the rigging, and the watch set, — that is, the men were posted who remain awake to see that nothing happens to the vessel while the others sleep. Then the tug returned to Baltimore, and every one except the watch went to bed.

Halde had scarcely been laid in his when he began to complain: "I want to go to Auntie. I do not like to sleep in a tray; it is too hard."

Loys thought Grandfather's house much more comfortable, and whispered, "Mother, let us go back to Bywater to-morrow."

They were soon asleep, however, and eager to dress and go on deck next morning when they heard the whistle of the tug, that had returned from Baltimore with a second tug to help it. Several vessels dropped down during the early hours, each provided with a tug; and an ice-boat, its plough cased in iron, had been sent to open the channel. There was quite a fleet surrounding the *Potomac*.

Presently the procession got into motion. The ice-boat went first, ploughing the great blocks right and left, sometimes mounting on a large cake, and breaking through by its own weight, sometimes backing to rush with more force against an obstinate barrier.

The vessels followed one by one in the path thus made, but the progress was slow. Occasionally, for a mile or two, they moved along quite easily in open water; again they would have to stand still. By night the company separated, each vessel seeking its own way. Some stopped, waiting for better weather; some tried the opposite side of the bay; none were in sight when the *Potomac* let go her anchor and the little tugs said good night.

About twelve o'clock the boys were awakened by something grating on the side of the bark.

"What is that, Father?" exclaimed Loys.

"It is a heavy piece of lead on the end of a line, which they are dropping down to find the depth of the water. This is called sounding."

The boys were satisfied and went to sleep, but Mr. and Mrs. Francis passed an anxious night. At each sounding the water was more shallow, until the line showed a depth of only three feet of water below the keel. The shore was still two miles off, low, sandy, and without trees or houses for protection, the distance between being neither clear nor solid, but made up of masses of ice and open spaces which would render either walking or boating dangerous, should it become necessary to leave the vessel.

Mr. Francis went on deck from time to time and always received the same discouraging answer to his questions. At last he came down, looking more

cheerful, and said, "If we do not ground until the tide turns, we shall be safe."

"When will that be?" asked his wife.

"In about an hour. It is nearly at its height; the bark scarcely moves now."

One more visit on deck and Mr. Francis reported that the tide had begun to ebb, carrying the bark from the dangerous shore. With morning the tug returned.

Orders were given to weigh anchor. The chain came up with a jerk. It had been snapped by the strain upon it, and the anchor was lost. This had caused the drifting of the *Potomac* during the night. Fortunately the vessel had been provided with two anchors, so the loss was not very great.

They certainly had a narrow escape. The captain of the tug told that several vessels were aground in the lower part of the bay, and that an oyster boat had been found with its crew frozen to death.

The work of the previous day recommenced. The little steamer puffed, struggled, and shrieked as before, slowly creeping forward, until twelve o'clock, when to the delight of all the way became gradually clear. A sailor was ordered to the masthead and reported that the channel was open as far as the eye could reach. The pilot decided to trust to his sails, and every one came on deck to bid the tug good-by. Mrs. Francis sent letters to Grandmother

and to Grandfather, in which the boys sent their love to all.

The sun shone, the wind blew in the right direction, and the *Potomac* was soon bounding along with sails stretched. They passed Annapolis, where young men study to be officers of the navy, and reached the Potomac River, their vessel's namesake, in time to anchor for the third night. They had so far made only seventy miles of their long journey.

Morning showed that the incoming tide had once more surrounded the bark with ice. There was nothing to do but wait patiently six hours until the tide turned.

Towards noon the water cleared in places. The captain and men got axes and pieces of board with which to open a space in front of the vessel so as to give her a fair start. After an hour of this work the order to "raise anchor" was heard. One by one the sails were set. The *Potomac* forced herself slowly onward. Sometimes she went, sometimes she stopped; then boards and axes were again brought into work. It was a tiresome day; night found them at the Rappahannock River, having covered but a distance of twenty miles when they anchored.

The fifth day dawned with a strong wind which carried the ice to the other side of the bay. The pilot took advantage of this to raise anchor and crowd on sail, long before the boys were up. When they

came on deck and saw the vessel rushing along, Loys cried out: —

"Captain! shall we be at sea to-morrow, and may I fish?"

"I hope to be at sea, but whether you will want to fish, I can't say."

"Oh, yes! of course. Mother, have you the hooks and lines where we can get them?"

"They will be ready when you need them. For my part, I wish the next few days were over."

By noon they passed York River; by five o'clock they reached Hampton Roads, where in 1862 the naval battle between the *Monitor* and *Merrimac* took place; and three hours later they saw the light-houses of capes Charles and Henry, one on each side of the entrance to the bay.

When they passed the capes, the flag was hoisted so that the name of the vessel could be reported at Baltimore. A schooner with a large 6 on its sail came bobbing towards them and put out a boat to carry off the pilot. He shook hands all around, wishing them a safe voyage, and adding, "A cold night, sir," to every one present, as he had done when he came aboard. Then the mainsail was slackened, and the *Potomac* checked her speed to allow the boat to approach.

Mrs. Francis had one more letter ready for By-water. The pilot put it into his pocket and slipped

over the side of the bark into the little boat, his baggage being tossed after him. Away he went, rising and sinking with the waves, which each moment became larger. Captain Stout now took command, the orders in his big voice sounding twice as important as those of the thin pilot: —

"Make ready! Man the starboard braces! Haul taut! Let go the gaff topsail!" And soon the bark, as if recognizing her master, leaped swiftly forward. Every one was in a good humor; the sailors worked with a will.

"Father," asked Loys, "where does the pilot go?"

"He sails about in that schooner until a vessel arrives from a foreign port, then he goes aboard and shows her the way to Baltimore. It is his business to bring vessels safely up and down the bay."

"Did you ever sleep in a river's mouth before?" asked the captain, who liked to joke. "Were you not afraid it would shut?"

"The ice nearly shut it for us that night on the Potomac River," said Mrs. Francis.

"Almost," agreed the captain. "Do you know what has its mouth at one end and its head at the other?"

Father whispered, "A river," and Halde was quite pleased to shout it out.

"How soon shall we be in South America?" asked Mrs. Francis.

A Bark

"We are just starting; the bay does not count in a sea voyage. We have still two thousand two hundred miles to go before we reach our port."

"This is the sea?" said Loys.

"Yes!"

"I am so glad! Halde, we can fish to-morrow."

CHAPTER III

THE WIDE SEA

"THERE are at least two happy moments in every sea voyage: one, when the pilot leaves the vessel, at the beginning of the journey; the other, when he boards her, at the end. The first shows that you are fairly off; the second, that the journey is nearly over," remarked Mr. Francis, as the pilot-boat faded in the distance.

"Don't you think Captain Stout more sensible than that man?" asked Loys.

"Certainly!"

"Then why does he have him here?"

"Though a captain can manage a ship on the ocean, it would be difficult for him to know all the many coasts and harbors with their changing banks and channels. For this reason a set of men are paid in each port to go in small schooners to meet vessels near shore and bring them safely to land. When the vessels leave again, pilots guide them out to sea; and while one is on board he has entire charge. The word *pilot* means a leadsman, or person who throws the lead to find the depth of the water."

Soon afterwards their father took the boys below. Mrs. Francis was already lying in her berth, as sea beds are called, looking very white and sick. The children had tea and laughed as the bark pitched or rolled; a strong north wind was blowing, and the captain said they were having a good send-off. Mr. Francis sat with one boy on each side of him to keep them from falling off the sofa. The dishes clattered, and the chairs went jumping about until they were tied to the table.

"The sea fairies are having a dance, Father."

"Yes; you had better go to bed before they ask you to join them."

"Let us go upstairs once more and see how it looks."

They could only get as far as the upper door of the companion way. The *Potomac* was running before the wind, followed by fierce dark waves that raced after her. The vessel pitched forwards and backwards like a rocking-horse. Every few minutes her head plunged under, dipping a deck full of water, which, washing back, drenched the sailors, sometimes knocking a few of them down. No one would believe how *hard* water is until they get a blow from it. At times the vessel received a tremendous sea on her side, which made her stagger in the other direction, the spray flying halfway to the topmast. Most of the sails had been taken in, and men in

their yellow oilskin suits were aloft trying to furl the others.

The splashing and breaking of the water, the shrieking of the wind, the shouting of orders, and the clatter of the men running to obey made such a noise that the boys were not able to hear each other speak; and the force of the wind against their faces was so great that they could only breathe in gasps.

Captain Stout laughed as they returned to the cabin. "A little of that goes a great way, young men. It looks rather lumpy out there, doesn't it?"

"It looks hilly," answered Loys.

"Yes, diversified by mountains and valleys, as the geography says."

The boys had great trouble undressing; first one would tumble on the floor, then the other. In bed they fared no better. All their strength was needed to prevent themselves from falling out; until their father stuffed pillows along the front, which held them in place.

They could hear the water gurgle and rush against the side of the ship, only a few inches from them. Then bump! splash! and a sound as if every wave in the big ocean was dashing over the deck.

"Father," called Halde, "I think we must be very deep down. Listen! the sea is on top of us."

"No, no, my boy; try to sleep."

Presently there was a dull thud, a crash of splinter-

ing wood and glass. The bark shivered, stopped a moment, then plunged forward as if shot from a cannon. Rivers of water poured in all directions. The skylight had been broken, and a great green wave tumbled through into the cabin, perhaps to wish Loys and Halde "Good night."

As the cabin was empty, no one got a wetting. Daniel, the black steward, came with a pail and a mop. The sailors began as quickly as possible to tack canvas over the opening. Before they had finished, another wave came seeking the first, and Daniel received the whole of it on his back; at which the boys were obliged to laugh, but not for long.

The excitement was scarcely over when Loys cried out, "Father, I feel so sick, my supper wants to come up."

"So does mine," said Halde.

"Well, let it come!"

The sea did not behave worse than their stomachs. A storm was going on inside of each, and waves of supper came rushing into the basin brought by Mr. Francis. They had not finished until poor Mother was sick also. Mr. Francis had a busy time; fortunately he kept well and was very kind, cheering everybody and telling them that they would soon be better. By and by, in spite of the racket, the boys slept.

Some hours passed, when a greater noise than

usual made the vessel tremble, and the family awoke to find the cabin again floating with water. The stove sputtered and steamed, giving off a gas which nearly choked them.

While they were in this plight, a bold bit of ocean made a waterfall down the front steps. "Father!" screamed both boys. "The sea is coming in, what shall we do?"

"Lie still! it cannot get you. The cover of the companionway has been washed off, but they are putting something over it to keep out the water."

Before this could be done, two more big waves came rolling into the cabin, spreading over the floor and splashing with every motion of the vessel, while a rumbling in the hold made the planks quiver.

Finally the top of the steps was covered, the water ceased coming down, and Daniel began bailing again with a canvas bucket. Presently the mate looked in, and Mr. Francis asked what caused the noise in the hold.

"A few barrels are loose, and they kick up considerable of a racket this rough weather," was the reply.

"Will they not break a hole, bumping against the side of the vessel?"

"Hardly, sir. We are about to fasten them."

Daniel succeeded in getting the floor tolerably dry, but the fire had gone out and the cabin was damp and cold. Halde looked very miserable. "I

want to go to Bywater; I don't like the sea at all," he remarked.

"Father," said Loys, putting his arm around Mr. Francis, "won't you ask the captain to drop anchor in the mouth of some river and stop a little, until it is less rolly?"

"We have no rope long enough to find the bottom here, my boy, and the rivers are too far away."

Just then there was a blaze in the captain's room. Mrs. Francis leaped from her berth and ran across the cabin, crying "Fire!" Mr. Francis also hurried over, and the captain, hearing the cry, rushed down the companionway as fast as his great bulk would allow. Mrs. Francis, meanwhile, had already smothered the flames with a pack of newspapers she had found. The captain, however, wishing to make sure, emptied a jug of water on the berth. It appears he had thoughtlessly left a burning candle on a table by his bed, and a lurch of the vessel had thrown the light over.

"We are having a lively night," he said, as he helped Mrs. Francis to her room.

"Do you think the storm will soon be over, Captain?" she asked.

"Well, you must expect a little more bad weather first. The Gulf Stream is still to pass, and until we are across it we will have rough sailing.

"Now, young gentlemen," he continued, stopping

before the boys' cabin, "you had better try to sleep or you won't be ready to fish to-morrow."

Their father tucked them well into their berths, and as nothing now occurred they soon followed the captain's advice. Mrs. Francis could not so easily forget her troubles and lay starting at every sound. Captain Stout turned in, but the mate often came to consult him, the wrinkles of his oilskin suit shedding water like gutters on a roof. Each hour the order was given to "pump ship," for the straining of a vessel in heavy weather causes her to leak; but the pumps brought up very little water.

Next morning when the children awoke they thought it must be yet night. The skylight and doors leading on deck were covered with canvas, so that neither light, air, nor water could enter. The fire had been kindled anew, and the little cabin felt stifling. The bark tossed frightfully, the port-holes, as the round windows in a ship's side are called, were constantly under the waves, and the sea still washed the deck.

Their father told them to remain in bed, and they gladly obeyed, for the dreadful nausea in their stomachs became worse whenever they raised their heads.

Breakfast came, but neither Mother nor the boys could look at it. Mr. Francis and Captain Stout had the table to themselves, though it was difficult

to sit there. Bars of wood had been put upon it crosswise, to keep the dishes in place; and even this did not prevent several plates from jumping off. The coffee spilt, the spoons and knives jingled, and once Mr. Francis' chair slid to the opposite wall, where it bumped with such force as to knock him on the floor.

The captain, before leaving the cabin, asked Loys if he would like to fish; but the poor boy was feeling too badly to answer.

At dinner it was still worse; no one tried to sit at table, but each person held his plate in his lap. A wave emptied itself into the soup as the steward brought it from the galley, making it unfit to eat. The cook had trouble to keep anything on his stove, and a roast fowl was the only dish not half raw. However, the boys began to feel better and were able to drink a little thin arrowroot and take a bit of dried beef which the captain recommended; but poor Mother could only lie with her eyes shut, waiting for calmer weather.

"How about the Gulf Stream now?" she asked, as the captain passed her cabin on his way to the deck.

"We are about in it. The wind being against the current makes it jagged sailing."

"When will we be out?"

"Early to-morrow morning, if nothing happens."

CHAPTER IV

THE GULF STREAM

"WHAT is the Gulf Stream, Father?" asked Loys.

"It is a current of warm water that comes from the Equator, through the Caribbean Sea to the Gulf of Mexico, thence northeast along the coast of the United States, where we are now crossing it. The Gulf Stream takes its name from the Gulf of Mexico, and is called a stream because it runs through the ocean like a river, always flowing in the same direction."

"If it is like a river, we might anchor in its mouth," remarked Loys.

"That we can't do. The Gulf Stream has no mouth, but loses itself in the Northern Sea; though a part of it returns down the west coast of Europe and Africa to the Equator. Would you like to see it?"

"Yes!" said Loys, but Halde thought he would rather lie still.

Mr. Francis wrapped Loys in a shawl and helped him to the top of the companionway, where he could look through a hole left in the canvas.

What a wonderful sight! As each heavy blue-black wave touched the freezing air, a steaming mist arose which formed into fantastic, ever changing clouds, breaking and rolling in fringes, edges, and bulky masses. The sea and sky turned in constant motion, the foam heaving upward, the clouds dipping down. Wandering snowflakes appeared and disappeared; and once, as the mist parted, a giant waterspout crossed the distance, and whirling nearer, burst with a loud report close to the vessel.

"It looks as if the water is too thick for us to get through. Do you think we will stick fast?" asked Loys, as he drew back his head from the opening.

"No, my boy, though it is hard work to get forward. Now you can see what running against the current means."

Loys had so much to tell when he came back that Halde concluded to have a peep also, but the scene was so wild and strange that he did not care to remain long.

"Oh, Mother!" said he, on returning, "we are sailing through boiling water, the steam is all around us, and the poor little snowflakes can't get down."

"Not boiling, only warm," explained his father.

"What makes it so warm?" asked Loys.

"The great heat of the tropics. The water you see here has come past British Guiana, the country to which we are going."

"Why doesn't it get cold?"

"A large body of hot water can keep warm for a long time, even when running through cold water. As it flows north it loses some heat, but at the same time it is always getting a new supply at the Equator."

"What makes it run through the other water?"

"Various things: the wind, the tides, the heat and cold, the earth turning around, the shape of the land. There are many currents in the ocean besides the Gulf Stream, some of which reach a speed of eighty miles a day. Even brooks and rivers have their currents and eddies, places where the water flows faster or slower."

"Halde, did you see a waterspout when you were up?" Loys asked his brother.

"No."

"That is a pity. It looks as if a wave had reared up on its hind legs to touch the clouds."

"A wave has no legs."

"Well, it stood itself up endways and whirled around till it broke in two."

"Is that true, Father? How could it?"

"There are currents in the air as well as in the sea. These, when blowing in opposite directions, form circular winds, which draw clouds and the water into a whirling mass, and make waterspouts. In the deserts huge columns of sand are drawn up in the same way."

It was a dreary day in the close, dark cabin. When tired talking, the boys read the books that Auntie had put into their box. They slept a great deal, and when the lamps were lighted early in the evening they went on a visit to Mother, who was better and able to take a cup of tea. She gave each an apple, which tasted better than ever before and which reminded them of Bywater, the orchard there, dear Grandfather and Grandmother, Auntie and their uncles, the past summer, and all their games.

After eating, they sang "Yankee Doodle," beating time on the partition; then made funny shadows on the wall by knotting their handkerchiefs into queer shapes of men and women that danced, bowed, and fought with each other as the boys moved their fingers before the light. Merry laughter filled the cabin, and the wild outside was forgotten. Mother, alone, had tears in her eyes.

Being now more accustomed to the motion, they passed a better night. By morning the Gulf Stream, which is from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty miles wide at this point, had been left behind. The wind shifted to southwest. Though it was still blowing hard, the vessel went more steadily, and the children wakened with the sun shining on them through the open skylight.

"Hurrah, Captain! Can we go on deck?" called out Loys.

"The waves still splash over it sometimes, but by noon I think it will be safe to come up."

"Do you feel like eating breakfast this morning?" asked their father.

"Oh, yes!" answered both together.

"Then dress and come quickly."

What a difference between yesterday and to-day! What appetites! Even Mother was able to take something. These sudden changes make much of the charm of travelling by sea.

After breakfast the boys got out some toys and puzzles, and by sitting on the floor with their backs to the partition they amused themselves without fear of falling. Some wagons and horses chased each other across the cabin as the bark rolled, which pleased Halde very much; but the block houses would not stand up and a whole company of soldiers went over before the enemy could be put opposite.

"I think at this rate we shall make a good passage, after all," said Mrs. Francis, as the captain stopped at her door on one of his trips up and down.

"At this rate we will not get there at all!"

"How so?"

"We are not on our course."

"Why do you not go on it?"

"The wind won't let me."

Loys asked what the course of a vessel meant.

Mr. Francis got one of the captain's maps and laid

it on the table. "Our course means the road we must take to go to British Guiana," he explained.

"There are no roads on the ocean," objected Halde.

"There were none on the land, either, until they were made by man."

"Yes, but no one could make a road on the sea."

"Why not?"

"Because the marks would wash away."

"Suppose you put the marks where they cannot wash away?"

"Where? How?"

Their father pointed to the table.

"Do you mean on a map?"

"Certainly!"

"I did not know that maps were to show the way to places. I thought they were just to learn geography at school."

Mr. Francis laughed. "At Bywater if some one would ask how to go to the next town, you would say, 'Cross the bridge at the creek, keep straight on till you come to a large buttonwood tree, then turn to the right.' With greater distances it is the same. If you wish to direct a person, you must have a point to start from and something to mark the way. You could not take our creek as a place to start from, for few people know where it is."

"Even the captain has never been to Bywater," remarked Halde.

"Just so, and in directing the whole world you want a place that the whole world will know. So the middle of the earth, or the Equator, has been taken to count from in going north and south."

"That is a good idea," agreed Loys.

"But in going east and west there is no Equator, and various nations have taken their principal city to start from. By and by, perhaps, all may accept Greenwich in England as the starting-point. Now look at the map. See these lines running up and down and across; they are the marks to show the way."

"I do not understand how they can guide you," said Loys, wrinkling his forehead over the left eye and looking hard at the map.

"I will try to explain. The lines across mark breadth or latitude; the lines up and down, length or longitude. The spaces between are called degrees and measure about sixty miles. Each is numbered; and any place can be shown by the numbers of the two lines that meet there."

"Could you tell where the bark now is?"

"I cannot; but the captain can, otherwise we would soon lose our way."

"You said you would show us our road on the map."

"As I have often told you, we are going to a country called British Guiana, on the upper part of South America."

"Here it is," said Loys, putting his finger upon the name.

"Right! To get there, our course, or road through the ocean, should be southeast. South to make latitude or the distance down, east to make longitude or the distance across. Baltimore is in about thirty-nine degrees north latitude, that is, north from the Equator. Georgetown, the capital of British Guiana, is in six. Six from thirty-nine leaves thirty-three degrees, or spaces we have to go; and if each space counts sixty miles, it makes one thousand one hundred and eighty miles in sailing down.

"But we must go across also, for Baltimore is in seventy-seven of longitude, and Georgetown a little beyond sixty, the difference being seventeen degrees, or one thousand and twenty miles. If we go straight east, then south, the distance will be three thousand miles; but by taking a southeast direction, this corner is cut off and the journey shortened eight hundred miles. Just now the wind is driving us east and not south, but I hope it will soon change in our favor."

After dinner Mr. Francis helped his wife and the boys on deck. They were well wrapped in shawls and sat in chairs tied fast to the booby hatch. The bark leaned on the lea side, almost to the water. At times the waves hissed and foamed over the deck's edge, but could not reach them. The south wind was much warmer than the north had been; and it

was pleasant, after eight days, to be able to remain in the open air, even though they could not move about.

"In a short time you will not need your overcoats," said Mother.

"Provided the wind changes," added the captain.

CHAPTER V

FINE WEATHER

THE wind continued in the same direction for five days. They not only made all their longitude, but a hundred miles more than was needed; however, the captain said this might be useful, as they would probably meet east winds farther south. The vessel passed north of the Bermuda Islands, instead of west, and was nearly as distant from British Guiana after being out two weeks as when she started.

This was not very satisfactory; but the boys were no longer seasick and began to enjoy the voyage thoroughly. An awning of sail-cloth was stretched over the deck, where they could have their chairs, toys, and books. They had picnics with the cakes, nuts, and candies from Auntie's box. Oranges, lemons, and ice were on board, and Daniel made lemonade. The captain also brought some little surprises: one day a bottle of prunes, another day some maple sugar.

At last the wind changed, and the *Potomac* turned her prow exactly south. Each morning the cold

grew less; pillows and rugs were brought up to rest upon in the afternoon, and except for a few hours at night, every one lived in the open air. They were rapidly approaching the tropics, that part of the world lying on each side of the Equator, where it is always warm.

As soon as the vessel was steady enough for them to keep their feet, Mr. Francis invited the children for a walk. A strong bulwark, or rail around the deck, prevented any one from falling off. First they scrambled over a number of closely packed boxes that formed the deck load. Here the mate sat mending a sail with a needle so large that it carried strong twine for thread. His thimble was a rough piece of steel the size of a cent, fastened in a band of leather fitting around the hand like a mitten; so that this queer-shaped thimble lay in the palm and could be pushed against the big needle with the whole force of the arm.

The second mate (there are always two mates, and sometimes more, to assist the captain in sailing and keeping order) was splicing or joining ropes by weaving the two ends together for about half a yard, and greasing the parts with tar oil to make them bend easily.

Upon the rigging could be seen sailors holding fast with their legs while their hands were busy, others perched like birds on the yards, and two sat

in stirrup-shaped seats hanging to the masts, which they were scraping.

The boys passed the large hatchway through which the cargo had been stored. It was now made fast by a heavy wooden cover stuffed around with tow. Next came the galley; this is the sea name for a kitchen. The black cook was picking a fat hen for soup and Mr. Francis asked him if he had been long at sea.

"Fourteen years, sir."

"I should not like to remain such a time as that," said Loys.

"I do not like it myself," replied the cook.

"Then why do you stay?"

"Because my pay is forty dollars a month. Ah, young gentleman! you will find by and by that in this world people don't do what they like, but what they must."

"I will do what I like as soon as I am a man," answered Loys.

"Perhaps," returned cook, doubtfully. "Now, I suppose you did not want to be sick the night of the storm, yet you were."

"That is because we are at sea."

"The land is still worse. Just the last time we were in port our mate was knocked down by an ice wagon and killed. The land is far worse than the sea," concluded the old fellow, shaking his head.

The children were amused to see the kettles and pans fastened with wires to keep them on the stove, and a coffee-pot built like a tower to prevent the water from splashing out when the vessel rolled. A ship teaches neatness and order, for nothing can be left lying about.

They then visited the forecastle, the place where the sailors sleep. Here a little black pig and a cat were eating out of the same dish. A boy, who was twisting some spun yarn into a strong cord, asked Loys what he thought of the storm.

"It was very bad. I hope there will be no more rough weather!"

"So do I," added Halde.

"You got a little sea down below, but up here we had the whole ocean over us. Me an' the pig an' the cat was nearly drowned. They put the pig an' the cat into the booby hatch to keep 'em from washin' overboard. After a while I crept in too, an' shoved the door shut from inside. No one knowed I was there. By an' by a wave broke the top an' filled the hatch with water.

"There was the three of us, scratchin,' bawlin,' an' tryin' to get out. No use. We was a'most dead, when at last mate thought of the pig an' opened the cover. When he seen me with the rest, he says I might go to the forecastle, an' it did not take me long to git there. Jest as I turned in an' was about to

sleep there was a bounce on the floor, an' I seen something with fiery eyes makin' right for me. I yelled with all my might. Cook, who sleeps next, in the galley, shouted, 'What's the matter?'

"'The devil is after me!' I says.

"'Don't put on airs,' says he; 'the devil don't drag the sea for such fish as you.'

"'Do, cook, come an' save me!' I blubbered.

"Cook poked his head in the door, an' lookin' round, says, 'You fool, it's the cat.'

"Sure enough, some one had brought in the cat an' the pig, an' wasn't I glad to have them for company!"

Loys and Halde laughed. Mr. Francis asked the boy's name, which he said was Bill, and he also told them that this was his first trip to sea. They then went on to the prow, or front part of the vessel.

Here Mr. Francis showed them a lady carved in wood with a gilt wreath on her head and smiling pleasantly in spite of being forever splashed by the waves. Here, too, they saw the anchor chain coiled up like a sea-serpent, and the cat-head that had been smashed at Baltimore. A few steps farther on stood the capstan, that is used to hoist the anchor, to shift the yards, and draw the vessel alongside the wharf. From the prow projected the bowsprit, and beyond it the jib-boom, where the three-cornered or jib sails are attached.

On returning they stopped to look at some fine white geese in a tub. These the mate was taking to sell on his own account. There stood also a coop of fowls, rare breeds that the captain had bought for planters who wished to raise these varieties on their estates in British Guiana.

When the boys again passed Bill, the young sailor, he asked them if they had seen what kind of sheets were used on deck. As both answered "No," he pointed to some ropes running at the back of each sail.

"How can a rope be a sheet?" asked Loys.

"That is a sea sheet."

"I don't believe you! Is it, Father?"

"Yes, it is so called," replied Mr. Francis. "A sheet means anything spread out or flat. We say a sheet of paper, a sheet of water, a sheet of tin or wax, as well as a sheet of linen or cotton for our beds. Although these ropes are not flat, their use is to extend or flatten the sails. Some ropes are halyards, because they haul up the sails; some are braces, as they brace or hold in place the yards; these are sheets, or you might say spreaders, as they spread the sails. It is necessary that each set of ropes have a name so that the sailors when they hear an order may know which to seize."

"Father, I would like you to show me the booby hatch where the boy and the little pig were hidden that night."

"It is the one near the cabin where your mother is sitting."

"Why is it called the booby hatch?"

"The booby is a stupid sea-bird, and perhaps sailors think this a stupid hatch because its boxlike cover is only for ornament, the real hatch being underneath."

By next day the boys could do without their overcoats. The *Potomac* made from one to two hundred miles each twenty-four hours. Mrs. Francis began to count the time it would require to reach Georgetown. Captain Stout said she had better allow a week for accidents.

"We are not through the horse latitudes yet."

"What are the horse latitudes?"

"They vary in winter and summer. I have found them anywhere between the 23d and 32d degrees."

"What an odd name!"

"Long ago, when the West India Islands were first settled, a cargo of horses was sent from New England to the Bahamas. The ship met with a long calm in these latitudes, the fresh water gave out, and all of the horses died. That is the origin of the name. In the geography they are called the Calms of Cancer."

"Do you think it is likely we will get into a calm on this trip?"

"Very likely; but at this season of the year it will not last long."

"It appears to me that everything is uncertain at sea."

"Yes, but as long as dinner is regular, it doesn't much matter."

It happened as Captain Stout had predicted. After a time the vessel began to go slower. Many sails were taken down as useless. The children could move without fear of falling. With the warmer weather, an even-going vessel, plenty to eat, and a sea appetite, nothing was left to desire; especially for the boys, when the mate came one morning and said:—

"Now is the time to fish!"

CHAPTER VI

FISHING

THE boys were some time getting their fishing tackle together, and then Loys asked the question, "What shall we take for bait?"

"Worms," answered Halde, promptly.

"Where can we find any?"

"There are plenty near the creek."

"Yes, at Bywater; you had better go for some."

Halde had forgotten for the moment how far they were from home. Presently he tried again: "Some people use little fish for bait. There must be plenty in the ocean."

"Yes, but we must have something to begin with; fish will not bite a bare hook."

Captain Stout suggested that they should ask the cook for a bit of pork. This was fastened on the hooks, and the lines were dropped, first on one side of the bark, then on the other.

"We caught more bass at Bywater in half an hour than we can catch fish here in a whole day!" exclaimed Loys, at last, looking at the big ocean with disgust.

"Perhaps it is the fault of the fishermen," said his mother.

Just then there was a tug at Halde's hook, and he called: "Loysie, come and help me. Hurry! It feels so heavy, it must be a whale."

Both pulled with all their might, and suddenly up came the line, bringing with it a great bunch of pale brown seaweed covered with yellow berries.

"We must be near land," remarked Loys, as he saw it. "Columbus found things floating when he came near land."

"This is not a land plant," returned Mr. Francis. "Its home is here; it grows upon the waves and thrives among the storms. Look at the masses floating in all directions like fields of grass on the blue water."

"Oh, how pretty! Let us catch more of it."

This was not an easy task. Even when the seaweed came near enough, a lurch of the vessel would cause them to miss their aim. The hooks also were too small, but Mrs. Francis made larger ones by bending some of her hairpins into shape, and these the boys fastened to their lines. The sport became very exciting; practice made them more skillful, and in an hour they harvested quite a quantity of the plant, which Halde said would serve his tin horses for hay. Among its slender leaves were found tiny crabs and shells that here spent their lives on one continued sea voyage.

Later the mate passed with a wooden box about a

foot long. In it was a reel, a long cord, and a stout hook. "Now we will see who catches the first fish," said he.

The children ran after him to the stern, where the man stands to steer. Here the mate placed his box on the rail, baited the hook, and threw the line into the water.

"We need not remain to watch it," he explained; "when anything jerks the hook, the spring will snap and let out the line with a whirring sound."

The boys, however, watched it for some time, but it was not until they had gone away and quite forgotten the rival line that the reel began whizzing like a watchman's rattle and the cord could be seen paying out rapidly.

In a moment the mate, Mr. Francis, and the children were at the stern. Every eye watched as the line was carefully drawn in. A gray object came nearer and nearer the vessel.

"There! Look! Look!" cried Loys; and what do you think it was? One of the sailors' flannel shirts had blown from the forecastle, and the current made by the vessel carried it against the hook on which it was caught. A hearty laugh went up at the mate's fish, but it is needless to say that the sailor to whom the shirt belonged was pleased.

By the time the hook was again set, eight bells sounded, and with it the dinner bell. They had

leisurely finished eating and the mate was still busy with a large piece of salt beef when whiz went the reel.

Cries of "A fish! a fish!" were heard. The man at the wheel forgot to steer, and the captain shouted, "Keep her full!" All started on a race to the stern, and this time it was easy to see that something alive must be at the end of the line.

"It is a dolphin," said the mate.

You could see it rushing away, the hook fast in its gill, and a streak of blood following, red through the blue water. The mate paid out line until the fish seemed exhausted, then he began drawing in, hand over hand; but such was the strength and activity of the big fellow that he had to be given the line again and again. At last, wild and struggling, he was brought under the rail, where the mate, seizing the grains, pierced his side and drew him on deck. The grains are a harpoon with three iron points placed on a ring at the end of a long handle. A rope is attached to the handle so that the grains can be drawn back after a throw.

The boys were still examining the fish when the man at the wheel called out, "Look! look!"

There, splashing, leaping, and playing around the vessel was a large school of what the mate called dolphins, cutting the clear water in every direction. As they rose and sank their color seemed to change

from light to dark blue, to green, and, where the sun shone upon them, to gold. Every one who could get a line now tried his luck.

A bit of white rag tied to the hook and dangled above the water was sufficient to make the fish snap. No one stopped to use the grains or to pay out line, as it made no difference if a few fish were lost. One after another was dragged on deck. The mate let Loys and Halde have a turn, and two of the largest fish ran at their hooks to swallow them. Mr. Francis helped to draw them up. Loys got his safely landed, but Halde's dropped off when near the rail and would not bite again. Even Mother, who came to see the fun, caught one.

In a quarter of an hour twelve fish, weighing from ten to twenty pounds each, lay gasping and flapping on deck, their bright colors fading from blue to yellow and to green as they died; and still others in the water below were crowding to swallow the hooks. But the captain said it would be a pity to catch more, as they could not be eaten.

A couple of sailors now came to carry the fish to the galley, where the mate, who knew how to do a little of everything, hung them up in turn, stripped off their thick skins and cut away the backbones and fins, when there remained large pieces of flesh for the cook to fry.

That night they had a grand supper. The cap-

tain preferred the bones made into chowder. The sailors ate heartily of whatever was given them, and even the cat enjoyed a bit; but the little pig refused to have anything to do with the feast.

Mr. Francis told the boys that the fishes they had caught, and which change into such beautiful colors when dying, were not dolphins, but coryphæna. The real dolphins are not fish, but a sea animal like the whale and porpoise; none are found in this part of the Atlantic.

On the day following their lively time with the fish, Mr. Francis took Loys and Halde to the stern and showed them the compass.

In a round, flat box covered by glass they saw a card of mica marked with thirty-two black points forming a star. At each of the four principal points was a letter, except at the north, which was marked by an arrow-head. S stood for south, E for east, W for west. The points between had two or three letters, meaning northeast, northeast by east, and so on for every direction. This card lay on an upright pivot in the centre of the box. The tip of the pivot and the little cup in the middle of the card upon which it rested were of agate.

As the waves pushed the vessel now here, now there, the card quivered and moved, but always stopped with the point marked by the arrow turned towards the north.

The boys watched it for a while; then Loys, stooping down in order to look under the box, said, "I would like to see the machinery that moves the card."

"There is nothing underneath, except four thin rods of steel, the size of knitting needles, which are fastened to the card."

"And is there no spring to make it go?"

"It requires no spring, no machinery; yet it works night and day, year by year, always watching, always pointing, as if it were saying to the man at the helm, 'Go where you will, this is north, this is north!'"

"But, Father, what makes it always turn towards the north?"

"Do you remember the Story of the Third Calendar in the Arabian Nights, and the Black Mountain that attracted the iron nails from the ship?"

"Are we near the Black Mountain," exclaimed Loys, looking out at sea, "and does it draw the compass?"

"Will the nails fly out of the ship?" asked Halde, peering into the distance.

"Is there truly a black mountain, Father? I can see nothing. Are you joking?"

"The Black Mountain does not exist, but the power which made men believe in such a mountain is real. The earth acts like a huge magnet, and its two ends, or poles, attract the steel rods of the compass and keep them always pointing north."

CHAPTER VII

A CALM

AND now the wind appeared to leave the vessel, or rather, the vessel, having passed the winds which blow in northern latitudes, had not reached those of the tropics. This is called a zone or belt of calms.

The mainsail flapped and the boom of the spanker creaked as the *Potomac* rolled lazily from side to side instead of going forward. The man at the helm went about other work, it being useless to steer. The sea looked as if the top alone was liquid, running over some solid thing beneath. The level distance resembled a ploughed field, the watery furrows of which sparkled in the hot sun. Sometimes a long swell would pass by without breaking the surface; not a wave could be seen.

Mrs. Francis, who had never ceased counting the days since the pilot left, was much disappointed. "Do you think this will be a long calm, Captain?" she asked one day.

"It may be long and it may be short; I have seen both."

"You are very discouraging."

"Oh, no; just take your choice."

"I may take my choice, but I will not get it."

"It is like betting on a horse race."

"That reminds me. When do we come to the horse latitudes?"

"We are nearly through them; one good day's run would put us out."

"Why do calms happen just here?"

"This is not the only place they are found. The South Atlantic, the Pacific Ocean, and both sides of the Equator have also their calms. I have had a vessel lie for three weeks in the Gulf of Mexico without being able to move a single knot."

"A knot?" repeated Mrs. Francis.

"A knot is our sea word for a mile. It is two hundred and forty yards longer than a land mile. Sailors are so accustomed to use a line with a knot tied in it for measuring that I suppose the name has arisen from this practice."

"I hope we will not remain here three weeks."

"The trade winds are not far off, and we may get into them before long," returned the captain, looking as if he were not at all certain.

"What are the trade winds?"

"Winds that blow in this part of the world from northeast to southwest pretty much the whole year. I have read that the word *trade* means a

trodden way, or way that is constantly followed. So, as this wind always blows in the same direction, it is called a trade wind. We are near the Tropic of Cancer."

"Do clouds make the wind?" asked Loys.

"The wind sometimes makes the clouds," answered the captain.

"What makes the wind?"

"When you take a glass of water out of a bucketful, is there a hole left in the water?"

"Of course not. The rest of the water runs in and fills the place."

"So it is with the air. The heat of the sun at the Equator makes the air hot, and it rises. The cold air from the North and South poles then rushes in and a wind, or air current, is formed. All winds are made in the same way. One place being hotter than another causes the air to rise, and the spot must be filled by the cold air surrounding it. Do you like stories?"

"Oh, yes!" answered both boys, at the same time. "Will you tell us one?"

They seated themselves on each side of the captain, who began: —

"We old sea bears meet with many strange things in our travels, and the story I am going to tell you is about a giant."

"Did you see him yourself?" asked Halde.

"No one can see him; he is always invisible."

"How do you know where he is?"

"By what he does. First of all, he has the power of making himself large and small at will. He can fill the whole space from sea to sky, and he is able to enter a room through the keyhole.

"As to his disposition, it changes with his size. When small, he is so gentle and friendly that a child need not be afraid to dance in his way, or the lightest butterfly may touch him without hurt; but he seems to get fiercer as he grows bigger. I have seen him, though he has no hands, lift up the heaviest man from deck and throw him overboard, or break one of these thick masts as you would a stick. He can make this flat, lazy sea toss and leap like wild horses, and pile up waves forty feet high. Sailors don't want him about, I can tell you. Why, sometimes, when angry, he will upset a vessel quicker than cook could turn over a saucepan."

"He is a wicked giant!" exclaimed Halde.

"Where does he live?" inquired Loys.

"No place in particular, he is always traveling; and that reminds me. When small, he seems lazy and does not care how soon he gets to a place, but when large, he goes as if the only thing worth having in the world was speed. Yet he has no feet."

"No feet?" repeated Halde.

"Neither hands nor feet. He has only a body,

and strength, and a voice. And what a voice! It grows large and small when he does. Sometimes you would think it a baby laughing; at other times the sound is big enough to make the man in the moon hold his ears."

"How can he do things without hands and feet?" asked Halde, who was not much interested in the voice.

"Well, you see, this giant seems only made for going, and limbs would be in the way. His feet could never keep up with him, and his arms would be jerked out after the first five minutes. He can go a hundred miles an hour."

"A hundred miles?"

"Yes, indeed. Once I found myself in his track when he was moving about sixty miles an hour. Such a sea as he kicked up! I say kicked because he made the water fly. One touch would send a wave twice higher than the mast. You could not tell if it were night or day; the spray was so dense it hid the sun, and the air was all water.

"We had ropes stretched over the deck, and the sailors had to creep along and hold fast to prevent themselves from being carried off. Two men were tied to the wheel in order to keep the bark on her course. Mr. Giant jumped on their backs and tried to push them away and wreck the vessel.

"He threw down one of the sailors with such force

that the man's leg was broken. Then off he rushed, shrieking through the rigging. The cables sounded like enormous fiddle-strings all scraping a different tune. It was frightful!

"I wish you could have seen us after he had passed; our canvas was tattered like a beggar's rags. Many a good ship went down before the giant that day, but we got safely through."

"I hope he won't be coming around while we are here," remarked Halde.

"His time for these latitudes is between the middle of August and the middle of October, though he has been met here every month in the year."

"You see, Father, there are giants in the world," said Loys, "the captain has heard and felt one. Only it is a pity he could not have seen him."

"I think he had quite enough without seeing him."

"Then you believe it?"

"I believe he heard and felt something; but the question is, was it a giant or a hurricane. Do you remember the storm in the Gulf Stream?"

"We certainly do!" answered Halde. "Poor Bill and the pig got an awful wetting."

"What made the waves so high?"

"The wind."

"And now ask Captain Stout the name of his giant."

"Of course he means the wind," cried Loys. "Don't you, Captain?"

"You are right. There are real things in the world more wonderful than in any story book, and the wind is one of them."

"Captain, you have not told us what makes calms?" questioned Mrs. Francis.

"Winds are divided according to the place they are found, into tropical, temperate, and polar. It is between these belts of winds, or when the seasons are changing, that calms occur. The horse latitudes, for instance, lie between the temperate and tropical winds. But calms are not always calm," added the captain, smiling. "Great storms sometimes happen in these latitudes, and light winds are met here too."

"Can wind really blow a hundred miles an hour?"

"It can blow much faster. On Mount Washington, in New Hampshire, it has reached a speed of one hundred and eighty miles an hour, but that is the quickest time known. Forty-five miles an hour is a heavy gale."

Just then the mate beckoned to Loys, and, pointing over the side of the vessel, said, "A whale!"

At first the boys thought he was joking. But on looking, there, sure enough, was a huge, lazy lump of shining black flesh wallowing in the water.

As the animal dived straight down his forked tail alone was seen — like that of a duck hunting for worms in the mud under a stream. Then up would come his great square head, and once they had the

pleasure of seeing him throw out a high jet of water, which the mate called "blowing his nose." Sometimes he would raise the front part of his body, curve his back, and disappear with a plunge. Halde cried out, "He is turning a somersault!"

The whale played around the vessel for about half an hour; no one tried to catch it, as the flesh is not good to eat, and they had no way of keeping the fat.

"I don't think he is *very* big," remarked Halde, after watching him awhile.

"About nine feet long. This is not a real whale, but what we call a blackfish," said the mate.

Bill, the sailor boy, who was cleaning paint on deck, whispered this riddle to Loys:—

"When is a fish not a fish?"

"When it's a seaweed."

"Wrong!"

"I don't know."

"Give it up?"

"Yes."

"When it's a whale."

"A whale is a fish; that is no riddle," said Loys.

"Do fish give milk?" asked Bill.

Loys began laughing.

"You can laugh if you like," said the boy; "but whales give milk."

"Fish can't give milk; I don't believe it."

"Fish can't, but whales do."

"Father, do whales give milk?" called Loys.

"Yes, certainly; and baby whales, when they are little, suck just like calves."

"Oh, how funny! a fish to give milk."

"The whale, though shaped like a fish, is not a fish and cannot breathe under water any more than a horse or a dog. His nose holes are on top of his head, so that he can draw in air easily when swimming, and through them he throws out the water he takes into his mouth with his food."

"I told you so," nodded the little sailor to Loys.

After supper Loys and Halde went to the forecastle, where the sailors were talking about whales. Several had been on board whalers, that is, on ships sent out to hunt whales.

"How do you catch them?" asked Loys.

"When we get up near Greenland, where they live, a sailor is kept on the lookout. If a whale is seen, he shouts, a boat is quickly lowered, and off we go. Generally Mr. Whale dives as he hears us, but he soon must come up to breathe, so we wait. Not a sound is made, every eye is strained, the rowers' backs are bent, the oars held ready. One man stands in the bow with a harpoon in his hand, another sits by the coil of rope with which the harpoon is fastened, to let it pay out free.

"Suddenly you hear a cry, 'There she blows!' Down cut the oars, the boat flies forward, and the

next minute whiz goes the harpoon. As soon as the whale feels the iron, down he sinks, the line spinning out after him. A big fellow sometimes carries off a mile or more of rope before he tires, and he goes so fast that if the line is not kept wet it will catch on fire. Each time he comes up to breathe another harpoon is flung into him. At last he can go no farther, and a long lance in his side ends the battle."

"I have been on a boat when the rope gets foul, breaks, and we have nothing for our trouble," said a red-haired sailor, taking up the story. "Or the harpoon misses; then don't the men growl!"

"I've seen times in a rough sea, when the whale is strong and active, that we had to cut the line and let him go, harpoon and all," added a third.

"The best is when the whale is dead and towed to the side of the ship. We cut off the blubber, the tail, and the head, hoist them into the hold, and let the carcass float away. Each whale means a good piece of money at home," said the first.

"I like better a spell of fine weather, and a kettle rigged on deck with a fire under it to melt out the oil. That's a jolly time to make doughnuts; though the blubber do smell powerful bad." This from the redhead.

"Doughnuts?" repeated Loys.

"Yes, cakes. The cook mixes them up, and we drops them into the boiling oil."

"Are they not very nasty?"

"Sailors can't be too choice," answered the man; "and blubber cakes are better than hardtack, often a year old and as full of creeping things as an ant's nest. How would you like to drink water in which dead rats are floating around?"

"Not at all!"

"You would be glad to get it if you had nothing else and were miles and miles from land. Why, I have eaten roast dog and found it very good."

"Your ship must have been an ocean tramp," remarked the whaler.

"She was as good a ship as you ever sailed in, but we met a hurricane. The galley was smashed, the cabin was swamped, and the masts had to be cut away. Before we were taken off by another ship we ate or drank what we could get."

As the boys went to bed they asked their father if the red-haired sailor had been telling them the truth.

"Yes," said Mr. Francis; "sailors have a hard life. Their food is often bad, and in case of shipwreck they suffer more than I can tell you. Yet they like the sea and are seldom contented on shore."

CHAPTER VIII

STILL UNDER SAIL

EACH day as the ship advanced the heat became greater. The family generally arose early and went on deck. It was pleasant to watch the dawn growing brighter over the gray sea and the yellow sun ball appear in the east, like a fire kindled to warm the earth.

One morning when the boys came up to enjoy this sight, Mr. Francis remarked: "The captain told you that wind could travel over a hundred miles an hour. I know something which goes ten times as fast, yet none of us can feel the motion."

"What is that?"

"Ourselves!"

"But, Father, we are very still, and the vessel is as quiet as if the anchor was down."

"All the same, you, the vessel, and the sea itself are moving about one thousand miles an hour. That is fast traveling, is it not?"

"Are you joking, Father?"

"No, indeed!"

Just then, across the sea, at the edge where the water seemed to meet the sky, was seen a tiny bit

of the sun. Each moment a little more came into view. Mr. Francis pointed to it and asked:—

"Why do we see more and more of the sun every moment?"

"Because the sun is coming up. My geography says, 'The sun rises in the east,'" answered Loys, happy to explain something in his turn.

"Suppose I tell you that the sun does not rise or come up, in fact does not move at all in our direction."

"But I can see it."

"Do you remember when we went so fast in the cars, how it appeared as if the trees and fences were running past us? It was the cars and ourselves that rushed forward, while the objects outside stood still.

"The same thing is happening now. The earth with ourselves on it turns toward the east. Every hour it moves about a thousand miles. As we turn we see more and more of the sun, just as we saw more trees and fences when we went forward on the cars."

"Why, then, do geographies say that the sun rises?" asked Loys, in a disappointed tone.

"I am sorry that they do, my boy. It is over three hundred years since we knew that the sun neither rises nor sets; yet the words are still used — mistakes have long lives."

After breakfast the boys had another surprise; a number of porpoises were seen playing around the vessel. These animals are strong swimmers and

seem fond of rough water. The mate ran for his grains in the hope of taking one. Climbing down some chains that hung from the bowsprit, he waited until the porpoises came tumbling and leaping beneath him, and finally succeeded in flinging the iron deep into the side of a lively fellow.

A splashing arose like that made by the paddle wheel of a steamer when the engine begins to work. The porpoises scattered in every direction, and the poor wounded one tried to follow. It rushed wildly here and there, dived, rose again, leaped into the air, until the mate, watching his chance, passed a running noose over its head and flung the line to the sailors above. Six men eagerly pulled on the rope, and presently the porpoise was drawn over the rail, still showing enough life to keep every one at a good distance.

It was about five feet long and took quite a time to die. As soon as the mate thought it prudent to go near, he cut it to pieces with his sharp knife. The meat of porpoises is coarse and dry, but sailors like it better than salt beef and consider the liver a delicacy.

"These animals are like whales," said Mr. Francis. "They breathe through a hole in the top of their head and give milk. But while a whale has no teeth, porpoises have very sharp ones and are greatly feared by the fishes they prey upon."

It was now near twelve o'clock, and Daniel came up with the sextant. This is an instrument used to measure the height of the sun above the horizon, from which can be found the position of a ship at sea. Captain Stout called the boys and asked them if they would like to look through it. Loys and Halde each took a peep in turn and saw the fiery reflection of the sun in a tiny mirror. Then, just as eight bells struck, the captain took his observation.

"Now, young men," he said good-naturedly, as he lowered the sextant from his eyes, "if you come downstairs, I will show you where we are."

The boys went for their father, and together they hurried to the captain's cabin. It was a snug little room, not unlike the one the boys occupied, only somewhat larger and furnished with shelves and pigeonholes for books, instruments, and papers. Here they found the captain busy with his calculations.

To pass the time Mr. Francis unrolled a map for the boys to examine, and what a strange map it was! Instead of countries, states, and towns being marked upon it, only the sea-coast with the bays and rivers emptying themselves along the shore were shown. All the rest of the map was covered by the Atlantic Ocean. Lines of longitude and latitude were drawn over the whole map, while every island, shoal, and current was marked.

"What do these numbers mean around the shores?" asked Loys.

"This is a sea map, or chart," answered Mr. Francis. "Each number shows the depth of the water at that particular spot."

"Why, there are hundreds of them!"

"Yes, and each one had to be measured with a lead line by men in boats. Think what work must be done before a map of this kind can be made."

"I see no numbers in the middle of the ocean."

"None are needed where the water is not shallow; a ship cannot run on a rock or a shoal in deep water."

"How deep is the deep, deep water, Father?"

"Not far from here, north of Porto Rico, the United States man-of-war *Blake* found a depth of five miles. The bottom of the ocean is like the surface of the land; there are plains, hills, valleys, and high mountains under water. Most of the West India Islands are tops of mountains whose bases are in the bottom of the sea."

"If I was a fish," said Halde, "I would swim up the high mountains and slide down on my tail."

"You foolish boy, how could a fish sit on his tail?" asked Loys.

"I would get a nice smooth shell for a sled."

"You could not sit down, anyway."

"Well, then, I would lie down; it would be more comfortable."

Captain Stout, having made his calculations, looked up and said, "We will now drive in a post to mark how far we have come."

"You can't, the water is too deep," contradicted Halde.

The captain made a round dot with his pencil where the lines of longitude and latitude which he had found crossed each other on the map.

"That is my post," he explained. "I have put one in every day since we started, drawing a line between the points to show our course."

Loys followed the line from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, east beyond the Bermuda Islands, then down, and found that the captain had put in his "post" where the latitude 28 and longitude 58 meet.

"And now, young gentlemen, you know exactly where the ship is, and — let us have dinner."

After dinner the boys went fishing, but caught nothing except seaweed. Still, this amused them for a time. As the mate saw what they were doing, he said: —

"In a few days you will not need a hook and line; the fish will fly on deck of themselves."

"Fishes can't fly," replied Loys.

"Wait a little; perhaps if the wind freshens, you may see some to-morrow."

"I don't believe it!"

The mate laughed and told them to come up after supper during his watch, and he would make them a swing.

As it grew dark the vessel began to move slowly through the water. There was not a cloud, the moon shone brightly, and a nice swing hung from the boom, on which the boys took turns, lazily rocking with the motion of the ship. All at once Halde cried out: —

"Do look, the water is on fire!"

Running quickly, they saw on all sides, at the prow and in the wake left by the broken waters, a pale fire wavering, sinking, and rising with the waves.

"You could light your cigar down there, Father," said Halde.

"I never knew that water could burn," remarked Loys.

"It is not burning," answered their father; "the light is made by a living thing resembling a bit of jelly, but so small that you cannot see it. Do you remember the lightning bugs, or fireflies, that in summer evenings filled the air at Bywater? Many other insects and worms have this singular power of giving light."

"They never need a lantern in the dark," said Loys. "And what quantities there must be! Whenever a wave breaks you see them."

"Yes, and in miles and miles of tropical seas,

besides. It would be impossible to form an idea of their number, but in a cubic foot of water 25,000 have been counted."

Eight bells now struck, and Mother said the boys must go to bed as they had been up early. They were soon in their berths. How pleasant it was to lie and hear once more the water gurgle outside, singing a sleepy song as the vessel moved onward.

Next morning a funny thing happened. The boys went to take their bath while it was still dark, and when they plunged into the tub they found themselves surrounded by sparks of fire. Every splash became a shower of light that broke over their bodies; and without stopping to think, both began to scramble out.

Mr. Francis, laughing, held them back and called their mother to see the glittering bath. By the time she got there the children had become accustomed to the fire which could not burn and amused themselves making the sparks fly in every direction. Halde named it "fire-water."

Mr. Francis took a little of it in a bottle to show the boys when they were dressed; but it was difficult to believe that the clear water could make the light that they had seen, or that it could contain living creatures.

"If a whale swallowed many, many of these little fire jellies, Father, would they burn his stomach?" asked Halde.

"No; there is so little heat connected with this light that it can scarcely be noticed, even with careful experiments."

"It seems to me the whole world is wonderful," said Loys, thoughtfully, his chin on his hand.

It was Sunday. The sailors did no work on the vessel, but busied themselves mending and washing their clothes, which they afterwards hung up to dry on lines stretched across the fore-deck. This done, they took a bath and dressed in clean suits; the rest of the day was devoted to pleasure.

Their chief amusement was telling stories; sometimes a good story-teller would continue his tale from day to day, for a week or two. The mate carved a wooden boat for Loys; and Bill, the sailor boy, made what he called a flying-fish for Halde. The little black pig was killed and roasted for dinner, and after it was served a fine roly-poly pudding with plenty of raisins inside.

In the evening the sailors played the flageolet and sang and danced. Bill, alone, refused to dance, on account of the death of the little black pig. "We were such good friends!" he sighed.

"But you ate a large piece of your friend for dinner," remarked the mate.

"I did that to comfort myself," answered Bill.

The children walked to the forecastle to visit the sailors, after which they sat talking to their mother

and father of the home they had left and the home to which they were going. It was a beautiful evening. The sky was clear, but to the northeast a gray bank of clouds had been creeping up and was growing darker and larger since the day ended. The captain and the mate looked in this direction from time to time.

Suddenly a strong wind blew out of the bank and rushed for the bark, wrinkling the sea as it came. The *Potomac* leaped forward as if roughly awakened. Captain Stout gave quick orders, which the sailors ran to obey. Instead of the flageolet, you heard the blast whistling a jig in the rigging and the water foaming about the vessel, that, lashed by the wind, soon reached a speed of ten knots an hour.

The squall passed and a steady breeze took its place. Low, black clouds flew across the sky like enormous bats, while high above them the moon seemed sailing in another blue sea. Sometimes a few large drops of rain fell on the awning. Mr. Francis pointed out four bright stars called the Southern Cross, which can only be seen in the tropics and the countries farther south.

Just then something whizzed past Loys, followed by the cat. Mr. Francis, quicker than Pussy, picked it up, saying: —

"Now, boys, here is a flying-fish. Let us go to the cabin and look at it."

The fish was about the size of a herring, with the fins at its neck unusually large.

"Can it really fly?" asked Loys.

"Did it not come on deck?"

"Yes; but it has no wings."

"You are right. It has only large fins which it extends, but cannot move up and down like the wings of a bird. It leaps rather than flies, and when once out of the water the fish is carried by the wind from thirty to forty feet before it falls; just as if it were a leaf or a bit of paper. You will see plenty of flying-fish to-morrow, and very pretty they look when a quantity spring into the air together."

As they went again on deck, Pussy sat on the rail of the vessel watching to catch fish; which showed that she and they were old acquaintances. The mate also watched and picked up a few for the boys' breakfast.

After that night the *Potomac* continued running southward with full sails, making about two hundred knots a day, for the trade winds had at last been reached. The sun became hotter and hotter, though rain-clouds often flew about, bringing frequent showers and leaving bright rainbows as they cleared away — so many rainbows that it seemed as if every cloud had one of its own.

The boys began to be anxious to end their voyage. The box of cake was nearly gone, and the apples

had been finished long since. Every morning they asked the captain if British Guiana was in sight. They packed and unpacked their books several times and begged their mother to have ready the clothes in which they were to land.

Captain Stout laughed and joked about their impatience, telling them to "take their choice about the time of landing."

Finally, the happy morning arrived, and after twenty-four days at sea the journey was over.

CHAPTER IX

LAND AT LAST

THE dark blue water became light blue, then pale green, then a dirty yellow; for the large rivers of South America carry out so much mud that the sea is colored many miles from shore.

A man was sent aloft on the mainmast and another stationed at the bow to keep a good lookout. The mate walked restlessly from place to place, sometimes mounting the rigging and straining his eyes towards the southwest. Captain Stout had his glass pointed in the same direction.

They were now in the current that sweeps along the top of South America on its way to the Gulf of Mexico, and care had to be taken that the *Potomac* would not be carried past British Guiana.

Most of the sails were furled. A tub with the lead line had been brought from the booby-hatch. Every twenty minutes the rope was passed along the side of the vessel where three sailors stood to hold it clear. At a word from the mate, down dropped the lead, the line paid out until it touched bottom; then all hands drew it rapidly on deck. Bits of red

cloth marked the fathoms upon it, each fathom being six feet long. The mate counted these and reported to the captain, who went to the cabin to consult his chart.

A hawser, or rope, the thickness of a man's arm was dragged forward. Bill said it was a thread to sew the sails with, but the mate explained that it was used for tying the vessel to the wharf. Next, a small line was run up to the masthead to hoist the *Potomac's* flag on her arrival.

The coast of British Guiana is so low that it cannot be seen until you are quite near land. To help seamen to find the harbor, a ship, which carries a flag by day and a light by night, has been anchored twelve miles from shore. It was for this "light-ship," as it is called, that all on board were looking.

Presently a cry came from aloft, "There it is!"

"Where?" shouted the captain.

"West by south, sir."

At first the boys could see nothing; then a small speck appeared, which grew larger, until it took the shape of a flag. The *Potomac* ran up her flag in return, and the light-ship put out signals to inform the harbor master of Georgetown that the *Potomac* had arrived.

"Is it not wonderful," said Mr. Francis, "that we were able to sail over two thousand miles and find that small flag on the great ocean!"

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A Group of Palms

"Captain Stout is a very clever man," answered Halde.

"He is a good navigator; but had it not been for the men who invented the compass and the sextant, and for those who prepared the charts and wrote the books which the captain uses in his calculations, such a journey would have been impossible."

Meanwhile the *Potomac* approached the light-ship and a pilot-boat could be seen putting off, which soon reached the bark. The rowers, as well as the pilot, were black men. Slavery once existed in British Guiana, and a great number of negroes were brought there from Africa.

Along the shore the tall chimneys of the sugar estates came into view, with cocoanuts and cabbage-palms between. Next, the shipping in the harbor was seen, then the fort and the city with its light-house, church spires, and market.

The *Potomac* moved on with many directions from the pilot, and picked her way among a crowd of boats, big and little, to an open space opposite the fort, where she dropped anchor.

The harbor master arrived in a fine launch manned by a black crew and asked from where the vessel came, to whom she was sent, how many passengers she carried, and what cargo she brought. After him the health officer paid a visit to see that no one on the vessel was ill.

The passengers were now free to land, and as the *Potomac* would remain anchored until a wharf was ready for her, Captain Stout offered to take the family ashore in his boat. You may be sure that no one refused.

"Do you remember when I told you in Baltimore that you would be as glad to end your voyage as to begin it?" said Mr. Francis. But the boys were busy seeing the boat lowered, and did not hear him.

The captain again appeared in his high hat and black suit. The sailors were dressed in clean checked shirts and white duck trousers. Father, Mother, and the children wore light clothing and straw hats. They had sailed from winter into summer since their journey began.

A wooden step-ladder hung at the side of the bark, down which each one went backwards. The *Potomac* lay in the mouth of the Demerara River, and the current going out met the tide coming in, so the little boat tossed a good deal. The rowers had a hard pull over the jerky water, and Mrs. Francis began to feel sick; but the distance was short, and in a few moments the family found themselves once more with the solid ground beneath their feet.

A drive soon brought them to their hotel, where, on being shown to their rooms, they were glad to

lie down, for the least exertion was tiresome in the great heat. Towards evening, however, the air became cooler, and having had a good nap and a bath, they felt ready to go out.

They drove through a wide street with prettily painted houses on both sides, each surrounded by a beautiful garden. Down the middle of the street were ponds covered with lilies and bordered by pink and white oleanders. But what pleased the boys most was the many cocoanut trees they saw along the way, bearing hundreds of nuts, some large, brown, and ripe, others small and green, half hidden by bunches of yellow blossoms.

The street ended in a turn which brought them to the coast. Here they had a last view of the *Potomac* rocking idly in the harbor. Mr. and Mrs. Francis listened to a band that was playing by the sea wall, while the two boys watched the children of the colony running races and building forts in the sand.

After the concert was over they drove along the coast. As far as you could see there was neither hill nor mountain; nothing but a low, flat plain. They passed several sugar plantations. The fields were surrounded by trenches on which flat-bottomed boats drawn by mules were carrying the ripe canes to the buildings where the juice is crushed out and made into sugar.

All of a sudden a parrot flew by and perched on some bushes quite near.

"Stop, stop!" cried Loys; "let us catch it. I wonder to whom it belongs?"

"My dear boy," said his father, "that is a wild parrot. In the woods here you can see large flocks of them. They are so plentiful that you may even eat parrot soup if you like."

"How do they catch them?"

"Ask the coachman; perhaps he can tell you."

Loys climbed on the box beside the driver and repeated his question.

"You watch wah deh feed, young massa, and lay some branch about, covered wid sticky gum. Den trow a little seed or fruit deh. When birds come to eat, dey stick fast. You catch dem easy, ei, ei!"

"Where do you get the gum?"

"From de sappadilla an' de star-apple trees."

"Do wild parrots ever fly into town?" asked Loys.

"No, little massa. Dey no seem to prefer de town."

Loys remained on the box, thinking he would hear a great deal about the strange birds and trees from the coachman as they drove along; but he found the man could tell him very little. It sometimes happens that those who live the longest in a country know the least about it.

When they returned to the hotel, it was dark. In the tropics day ends about six o'clock throughout

MARKET DAY IN A VILLAGE SQUARE

the year, and there is no twilight. The boys had dinner and soon after went to bed. Mr. Francis promised to take them house-hunting the next morning; he intended spending at least a year in Georgetown and wished to get settled as soon as possible.

CHAPTER X

A HOME IN THE TROPIC OF CANCER

NEXT day, after breakfast, the family started off on their search for a home. It happened that a gentleman who was leaving the colony wished while absent to let his house furnished; here they went, and were delighted to find it was just what they needed.

After passing through an iron gate they entered a large garden, where the house stood, shaded by tall palms. A high flight of steps led to the front door, which opened on a gallery or porch enclosed by jalousies, a kind of swinging shutter used in the tropics.

The parlor, called by the English a drawing-room, came next, with a dining room and back gallery, from which a stairway went up to the second floor and ended in a small tower which overlooked the town.

The furniture was neat, and Loys saw two little iron cots in the children's room that seemed as if just waiting for himself and Halde. A cosy dressing room, bath, and three bedchambers were found on

the second floor; while the basement contained a storeroom, a pantry, an office, and the servants' rooms.

"Where is the kitchen?" asked Mrs. Francis.

"Outside, in the yard," called Loys, who had already been there.

"It is not very nice," she remarked on entering the low building meagrely furnished with a few white pine tables and some pans hanging on the wall.

On returning to the house, several things struck them as singular. No chimneys or fireplaces were to be seen, the numerous doorways between the rooms had no doors, the floors had no carpets, and the outside walls appeared to be nothing but windows.

"It is to make the house cool," explained Mr. Francis.

"How will we keep out the flies?" sighed his wife.

"House-flies do not live in British Guiana."

"That is fortunate!"

"Yes. If you tried to darken the rooms as at home, we should die of the heat. In this climate buildings are planned to let in the most air possible."

"Oh, Father!" exclaimed Loys, "do come and live here. I think if Robinson Crusoe had found a house like this on his island, he would have rented it right away."

"It certainly would have been more comfortable than sleeping in a tree," agreed Mr. Francis.

"Father, there is a great big rocking-horse in the children's room," cried Halde. "I hope you will rent the rocking-horse too."

"Of course. But now we must go back to the hotel for lunch."

After having eaten, Mr. Francis went to the owner of the house and made the final arrangements for taking it. When he returned, he was amused to find his wife and the boys busy packing, with the idea that they could move in at once.

"How will we get dinner without a cook and a maid?" he inquired.

"We can buy bread at the baker's shop. I saw one near our house," suggested Loys.

"I will milk the cow and we can look for eggs in the stable as we did at Grandmother's," added Halde.

"There is no cow to milk, no eggs to find, no hens to lay them, no wood to light the fire; nothing, nothing, nothing except your dry bread, which will be a poor meal."

"Your father is right," said Mrs. Francis. "We are too impatient. I will ask the mistress of the hotel to get some servants for us before we start. Meanwhile we can go to a store and order the things we need. Loys, take a pencil and write down what I call out: Tea, coffee, sugar, rice, flour, a ham, lard, butter, and soap. What else?"

"Jelly!" shouted Halde.

A Home in the Tropic of Cancer

"Those nice tins of biscuit, like we had on the vessel for lunch," added Loys.

"Brooms, candles, pepper, and salt," continued Mrs. Francis, "and anything else you see in the store that we may need."

The boys and their father set out, while Mrs. Francis went to inquire about servants. By evening she selected two from those who came to hire and gave the cook money to buy fresh meat, fruit, and vegetables, so that the family would be able to take their meals in the new house the next day.

Morning came. The trunks were carried down and put on two donkey carts. The darkey drivers quarrelled with each other for the first load, then whistled, yelled, and beat their little animals to make them hurry. Mr. and Mrs. Francis, the children, the bundles, and the toys and books followed in a cab.

Mr. Francis had engaged a porter, who, with the cook and maid, was waiting at the gate. A number of street boys collected around the carts as they drove up in front of the house, and women bearing heavy trays on their heads stopped to look on. In a few minutes there was a large crowd.

A man had arrived from the shop with the things ordered; and as it was near breakfast time Mrs. Francis, leaving her husband to manage the noisy mob, went to see what cook had brought from market.

A bright fire blazed on the raised open hearth. This, with a small brick oven, was the only place in the kitchen for cooking.

"Can we buy a stove in town?" asked Mrs. Francis of the cook.

"Yes, missus, but dis same place cooks too good. Me make a fry, an' a bake, an' has yams, fresh bread, an' fruit for breakfast. You like dat?"

"I will know better when you send it up. But it seems to me you are not the same woman I hired yesterday."

"No, missus. Me is not dat same cook. Me is dat cook's cousin. She's take too bad dis mornin', an' me come in she's place. When her's better, her come."

"I hope you will do well," concluded Mrs. Francis.

"Me's a master cook, no mistake!"

At breakfast it appeared that the cook's cousin had somewhat overrated her talents. The fry was a fish called queriman, caught that morning in the sea, the bake was a corn-cake, and the yams were a kind of large potato, the thickness of a man's arm and nearly as long. Everything had been prepared in a tasteless manner, but a dish laden with tropical fruit as bright as flowers made up for other deficiencies.

The boys were especially pleased with the mangoes. This is a fruit the shape of a kidney, the largest ones being the size of a cocoanut, the smallest not bigger

than a hen's egg. Its skin is smooth, like that of an apple, and is tinted red, yellow, brown, or green according to the variety; its flesh is a bright yellow and very juicy.

However, it is much easier to tell what mangoes are like than to eat them. After paring one, Loys tried to take a bite; but the fibrous flesh would not yield, and as he pulled with his teeth the yellow juice ran through his fingers and wet his face, his hands, and his arms. Halde fared no better.

Mrs. Francis decided to put a fork firmly into hers to keep it on the plate. She finished one side safely, and had begun the other, when the fruit slipped from under her fork to the table and thence to her lap, making a yellow spot wherever it touched.

"That fruit must give plenty of work to the washerwomen," said her husband. "Now I will try my luck. Carla, how do the people here eat mangoes?"

"You must leave a circle of skin at each end to hold it by," answered the maid. "Then pare the rest and cut the flesh from the large seed in the middle. After that you can take the pieces with a fork, sir."

Mr. Francis followed Carla's directions and found that mango eating, like many other things, is easy when you know how to do it. All agreed that the troublesome fruit was excellent.

Breakfast ended, Loys and Halde ran to the gar-

den. One side was bordered by a thick row of trees on which they saw a round green fruit. It hung from the branches by a stringlike stem, a quarter of a yard long, that Halde called a shoestring. Loys went to the kitchen door and asked the cook if she would tell them the name of the fruit.

"It be a monkey-apple," said cook.

"Is it good to eat?"

"Yes, when it be soft an' yellow."

"When will it be soft and yellow?"

"Ei, ei! young massa, how me know dat?"

Loys turned to look at some other trees and suddenly exclaimed: "Over there are mangoes like the ones we had for breakfast! And see, they hang on green strings like the monkey-apples. Are they ripe, Cook?"

"Not quite, young massa."

"Will they soon be ripe?"

"When deh gets nice an' red, young massa."

"Nothing is ripe! This is a very poor garden," said Loys.

"De guavas be ripe, young massa."

"Which are they?"

"Dat tall tree over yondah."

Loys followed the direction of her finger and saw a tree covered with yellow fruit the size of a walnut. Its bark was peeling off in places, like that of the buttonwood or hickory trees at home.

Just then Mr. Francis appeared and Halde shouted, "Father, do come here and look at this buttonwood tree filled with little oranges."

"Please, sir, deh be guavas," corrected the cook, with a courtsey.

"May we have some to eat, Father?"

"Are guavas good for them, Cook?" asked Mr. Francis.

"They be better stewed than raw. I stew some with sugar for dinner."

"But I want something to eat now," insisted Loys.

"De oranges be ripe, young massa."

"Father, did you ever hear of anything so foolish? Cook says that these green, green oranges are ripe."

"So deh is," repeated cook.

"Must they not first turn yellow?"

"There be no yellow oranges here," insisted the cook.

"It is easy to decide without a dispute," said Mr. Francis. "The cook may bring a few upstairs and we can try them. But now come in; the hot sun will give you fever."

"I would like to taste a new fruit, I do not care for oranges," objected Loys.

"Here is a little tree full of limes, a kind of lemon. You and Halde may pick some, and cook will make lemonade for you."

CHAPTER XI

NINETEEN MILES A SECOND

"FATHER," asked Loys, looking around the dining room, "why are there no chimneys in the house?"

"We have no need of fires; it is never cold here."

"What happens when summer is over?"

"The summer never ends. This is the Torrid zone."

"If winter can come to Bywater, I do not see why it cannot come here."

"I told you on the *Potomac* that the earth turns from west to east every day, which makes light and darkness. At the same time it travels in a great circle around the sun. So the earth has two motions, like a top when spinning and moving over the floor. The last motion is so fast that every time my watch ticks we have gone about nineteen miles. In this way we are able to get around the sun once a year."

"I see now why poor Mother has headaches so often," remarked Halde. "It is a pity we cannot stop a little and rest."

"The earth in its journey leans at times towards

the sun, at times away from it. The places on which the sunlight falls directly are the hottest, and those where it shines in a slanting direction are the coldest. In the tropics the sun's rays fall directly throughout the year, so it is always summer there; while at the poles, where but little sunlight can fall, it is always winter. In countries lying between the poles and the equator the heat varies according to the position of the earth, thus making the seasons."

"It is like a merry-go-round," said Halde, "and the sun is the horse in the middle."

"We can never skate, nor slide down hill here," remarked Loys, regretfully.

Cook now entered with the lemonade of limes that the boys had picked in the garden. A piece of green skin was curled over the rim of each glass for ornament, and a lump of ice tinkled in the middle. Halde quickly swallowed his lemonade, but instead of drinking, Loys looked at his glass with eyes full of wonder, until Mr. Francis asked him what was the matter.

Loys colored, but as his father waited for an answer he pointed to the lemonade, saying: "You told me winter cannot come to British Guiana. Look at the ice in my glass."

"Every month a large ship-load of ice is sent here from Boston and stored in an ice-house, just as at home. Many good things are packed in the ice,

such as grouse, partridges, fowl, beef, and mutton; and after being sometimes forty days on the way they come out tasting as if killed only a short time before.

"You can also get American fruits and vegetables at the ice-house: apples and pears, cabbages, beets, carrots, celery, and potatoes. Nearly all that we eat is brought from the States. We use only South American air and water, so you will remain little Yankees however long you stay here."

Mrs. Francis now went upstairs and the boys followed. Trunks stood open and clothes were scattered about the room. Carla was busy making the beds. A woman sat sewing some thin white material woven in tiny holes, and as the children went into the nursery they saw that each cot was surrounded by a curtain of the same stuff. It hung on a frame fastened to the ceiling, and when tucked under the mattress below, made what Halde called a "bed-house."

"Why have you put this pretty curtain around our beds, Mother?" asked Loys.

"That is a mosquito net," explained Mrs. Francis.

"Is it to catch mosquitoes with?"

"It is to keep mosquitoes from catching you."

"Are they very large here?"

"No, but very plentiful."

"They are not so bad here as farther up the coast," remarked the seamstress. "I know a gentleman who

had the table and chairs under a net when he took his meals, so that he could eat in peace. The vampires are bad there, too."

"What are vampires?"

"Large bats that bite you with their sharp teeth and suck your blood when you are asleep. They suck animals, too. Some places along the river you can't keep a single fowl; the vampires suck them all to death."

"Do they kill little boys, also?" asked Halde, looking troubled.

"I never heard of their killing any one; but when you wake up with a bleeding ear or toe after being sucked by a vampire, you feel well weak."

"If one comes to me, I will cut off its head with Mother's scissors," said Halde, boastfully.

"They do not come when you are awake, little master," replied the seamstress.

"Won't the mosquito net keep them out?" asked Loys.

"I think it would; besides, they are not often found in town. On the plantations the men hang their hammocks in open galleries, or when traveling they swing them under the trees, where the vampires can easily come."

"Do you live in the country?"

"I lived there when I was young."

"Did you see many wild animals?"

"Plenty!"

"Any monkeys?"

"Yes, in the cane pieces."

"What are the cane pieces?"

"The fields where the sugar-cane grows. The monkeys run about in them as busy as rats, eating the sweet cane and talking to each other."

Loys had been asking the questions, but Halde now inquired, "Can monkeys really talk?"

"I think they speak a language of their own, and people down here believe that they could speak ours, but are afraid that if they did we would put them to work. They are such clever beasts. I have seen a black quata monkey scrubbing the floor with a cocoanut husk, just like a woman. They can wash clothes and bring water if you teach them, and they nurse and carry their young about, as sensible as ever."

"Oh, Mother! listen to that. Will you get me a little monkey so I can teach it to read?" begged Loys.

"That could not be done," answered Mrs. Francis.

"Father says we should never be sure a thing cannot be done until we try it many, many times. Now, did you ever try to teach a monkey to read?"

"No, indeed."

"Then you don't know if it can be done or not; and I am going to try."

"Very well."

"But I must first have a monkey."

"Of course."

"And I too," added Halde.

"A nice little sakawinki, that is the kind," suggested the seamstress. "Yellow, with a white face, a pink nose, and a long tail tipped with black. They are no larger than a small kitten."

"Mother, will you get us each a sakawinki?" cried the boys both at once.

"Ask your father."

Mr. Francis was busy unpacking when the children burst into his room.

"Will I buy two monkeys? Certainly. Did you see the cages in the back yard? I am going to fill them with animals and birds, and you may teach them all kinds of tricks."

"You are too good, Father," said the boys, each hugging one of their father's arms.

"That will do. Now run away until I arrange my things. All in good time."

"Will to-morrow be a good time?"

"I am afraid to-morrow is a little soon. But whenever I see an animal or bird for sale, I will buy it. In the end we may get quite a collection. Now run away."

The boys hurried off to their mother with the good news, and then asked the seamstress if she knew anything more about monkeys.

"I will tell you a Nancy story about one, if you wish."

"What is a Nancy story?"

"That is what the black people call any story which is not true. Nancy is supposed to have been an old slave, very witty and cunning, full of lies and tricks. One time he saw a man planting yams.

"'What you doing?' asked Nancy.

"'Me plant yams.'

"'Is dey cooked?'

"'Course not!'

"'Fool man, you cook de yams an' dey grow up jest ready to eat.'

"The man took Nancy's advice, and cooked and planted the yams, which Nancy came and stole the same evening, thus getting a meal without even the trouble of making a fire."

The boys laughed and begged for another story.

"One day Nancy and his friend Edit went out to steal a dinner. As it was Sunday Nancy took his preach book with him. They came to a house where they saw plenty of poultry, ducks, and geese.

"'Where's de master?' asked Nancy of an old man sitting in the doorway.

"'He's at church.'

"'Why for be you not there, too?'

"'Thiefs too bad jest now. I stay home for to watch de fowls.'

"'You come inside de house an' I read you something good.'

"The man being willing, they entered the house, and Nancy, closing the door, read in a loud voice until the watchman began to nod. Then, without changing his tone, he went on. 'Edit, take de largest drake. Go through de bamboo walk an' I will come wid a bag of sweet potatoes.'

"There was a startled quack and the sound of running feet, which told Nancy that his advice had been followed. Bidding his sleepy host good-by, Nancy left the place, taking care to go through the back yard and fill his bag with sweet potatoes."

"Not a bad story," said Mrs. Francis; "it reminds me of Grimm's fairy tales."

"But you have not told us the story about the monkey," objected Loys.

"Bo Monkey and Bo Tiger once took a walk together. Coming to a woods, Bo Monkey ran nimbly up the trees to pick fruit. After throwing a quantity of mangoes to his friend, he began to eat some fruit himself, but Bo Tiger called out:—

"'You, sir! Take dat out of your mouth an' trow it to me.'

"Bo Monkey, afraid to disobey, did as he was told, but it was weary work. Every fruit tree they came to Bo Tiger ordered him up and watched him so

closely that he could not get a single bite for himself. All at once a macaw flew over them.

"'Oh, what a pretty bird!' said Bo Tiger.

"'Fool tiger! You call dat thing pretty? Meself paint dat, hurry, hurry.'

"'Paint me like dat.'

"'Wid all pleasure,' answered Bo Monkey, who thought he saw a way to punish the tiger for his selfishness.

"'Will you go do it now?'

"'Certainly, if you done bring de materials.'

"'What you need?'

"'Twenty yards of rope, a bottle of turpentine, three brushes, an' some yellow, blue, an' red paint.'

"The tiger brought the things."

"Where did he get them?" interrupted Halde.

"The story does not tell," answered the seamstress.

"Go on," said Loys. "What happened next?"

"'You let me tie you to a tree,' continued Bo Monkey, 'because you move while I paint, it all done spoil.'

"The tiger, anxious to look well, consented; and the monkey, having passed a few yards of rope around him, said: —

"'Shake! Let me see.'

"Bo Monkey, finding his friend could still move, passed more rope around him, drawing it as tight he could, and again said: —

"'Shake! Let me see.'

"This time the tiger could scarcely stir, but the monkey, to make sure, went on until he had used all the rope.

"When he saw that Bo Tiger was quite fast, Bo Monkey, running to all the fruit trees, ate his fill. Then, cutting six tamarind rods, he beat the greedy tiger to his satisfaction and went home.

"By and by some wood ants came, and gnawing through the rope, liberated the prisoner; but ever since that day Bo Tiger has had stripes on his skin where the blows fell."

CHAPTER XII

NEXT MORNING

LOYS and Halde were awakened before dawn by the crowing of cocks. So many cocks! To hear them call and answer each other from all directions, far and near, loud and low, you might think a colony of fowls had settled the town.

Next, dogs of every kind howled, yelped, and barked as if the coming day was a thief against whom they wished to put the world on guard. It is true, each day takes from us something which never returns.

Presently, boom! went the five o'clock gun at the garrison near by.

As it grew lighter a thrush's clear voice began to pipe, and numbers of little birds whistling "kiskadi, kis, kis, kadi," fluttered past the window. The breast and stomach were bright yellow, the top of the head was covered with a black patch shaped like a jockey cap, and the wings and back were brown. Lively, quarrelsome things,—the whole garden soon became filled with their pleasant racket.

Some twittering wrens searching for food hopped in and out of a box fastened to the side of the house,

and a flock of vultures, each the size of a small turkey, roused themselves from their roost on the palm-trees; as the boys watched, at least fifty spread their ragged wings and soared away. Ugly, black, and silent, they prefer a bit of old dead horse, dog, cat, or even alligator to any good-morning song. A pert kiskadi amused himself by perching on the back of one of the hindmost and pecking him as he flew. In vain Mr. Vulture tried to get free; his little enemy left only after giving him a good drubbing.

All at once a queer chattering began. As it was now light, the boys climbed from under the mosquito nets of their "bed-houses" and ran to the window.

In the next garden a monkey was chained to the top of a post, where he had a small house of his own. When he saw the children, he caught the limb above him and stood up on his hind legs, nodded his head, wrinkled his forehead, winked his eyes so fast you could scarcely see the lids, opened wide his mouth as if grinning, and snapped his white teeth together. Then he turned over upside down, swung by his tail, hung on by one foot, or a hand, and made all kinds of antics, jabbering in his odd language the while.

Loys and Halde clapped their hands in return, laughing so loudly that Mrs. Francis opened the door and asked what was the matter.

"Mother! come here. Look at this monkey, he knows us," cried Halde.

"How can he know you when he never saw you before?"

"I did not say he saw us before, I said he knows us now," insisted Halde.

"A rather short acquaintance," answered his mother.

"Do beg Father to buy him," broke in Loys. "May I go right over and ask if he is for sale?"

"What, in your bare feet!"

"Where are my clothes? Let us dress quickly, Halde. Father, will you give us money to buy that monkey? Isn't it a good thing that you took this house with a monkey next door? Wasn't I sensible when I advised you to rent it?"

"Yes, very sensible," agreed Mr. Francis, who had just entered.

"And may we buy him?"

"If the owner will sell him."

"Hurrah, Halde! This is a happy day. Let us hurry." But instead of making haste, the two boys took hands and jumped around till they were out of breath.

Carla now brought their chocolate and toast. Loys drew a table to the window, that they might watch the monkey while eating.

Their new friend was certainly not handsome. His nose was flat, with wide nostrils; his mouth, large, with thin lips; his eyes, small, yellow, and covered

by white lids; and his ears were large and placed far back on the head. A glossy black patch of hair came down in a point to the middle of the low forehead; a few short, light hairs formed the brows; while darker hair along the cheeks and under the chin made a beard. His jaws were wider than the temples, and his sharp teeth looked wicked, especially the long, pointed ones on each side of the mouth.

The oddest thing about the monkey was that he was always in movement. In and out of his house he went, on top and under it, down the post and up again, swinging, sitting, scratching himself — anything but lying down to rest.

When the boys had their breakfast, they started off and soon returned with the news that the neighbor would sell his pet for three dollars. This being satisfactory, the monkey was brought home and chained to a post in the back garden.

The first thing the children did on his arrival was to feed him. Halde, a little timid about going near, pitched him a mango. He caught it in his two front hands, pounded it on the ground to make it soft, tore off the skin with his teeth, and ate it in less than a minute.

The boys laughed at the funny, quick bites he took; at which he seemed offended and showed his temper by throwing the seed at them. This done, he put his fingers, four at a time, into his mouth and sucked

them, then the thumbs, and lastly, licking the palms of his hands with his little red tongue, he was what Halde called "as clean as ever."

When the monkey had finished his toilet, Halde handed him a stick, and the two had a tug of war which ended in the animal grabbing away the stick and victoriously biting and tearing it to splinters.

Loys, thinking the monkey might be thirsty, brought him a can of water. The animal upset the can, knocked it on the stones, and finally put it on his head like a hat. Although the can was too big for him and reached down to his shoulders, it seemed to please him very much; and he walked proudly around on his hind feet to show how fine he looked. Halde approached him unseen and struck the can with the mango seed. Thereupon Mr. Monkey threw off his finery in a rage and sprang at the boys.

Cook screamed and ran from the kitchen, and Mrs. Francis hurried to the garden.

"Dat same monkey bite well bad fo' true, when he vex. Come away from he, young massas," said cook.

"Will he really bite?" asked Mrs. Francis.

"True, true. Dey well wicked beasts. He an old man monkey. Dey too, too bad."

Mrs. Francis called the children upstairs until the monkey could be put in a safer place. They sorrowfully obeyed.

After thinking awhile, Halde suddenly exclaimed, "Mother, I know a safe place to keep the monkey."

"Where?"

"Let Carla tie him to the foot of your bed, so you can always watch him."

"But, Halde, I would not care to have such a visitor in my room."

Loys, who had been looking out of the window, called out: "Mother, see this cocoanut tree in our garden. Will you let our monkey climb up and throw nuts down to us?"

"What nonsense!"

"No, it isn't. When monkeys are angry they throw cocoanuts at travelers. That's the way Sindbad the Sailor got his." Here Loys shook his fist at the monkey to keep him in a favorable state of mind.

"Your monkey is too weak to lift a nut, much less to drag one from the tree by breaking its tough stem," explained Mrs. Francis.

"That is true," admitted Loys, glancing again at the enraged monkey, no bigger than a cat and with hands about two inches long. "But just the same I would like a nut."

"We must ask some one if they are ready to pick."

"Don't ask the cook, Mother. She says everything is not ripe, except the green oranges. Let us call the seamstress, she will know."

"Yes, there are plenty of dry ones and a number of

jelly cocoanuts; both are good to eat," replied the woman, after examining the tree.

"Are cocoanuts made of jelly?" asked Halde, who was fond of sweets.

"As long as the pulp is soft it is called jelly. The shell then is also soft and can be cut with a knife. When the nuts grow older, the pulp becomes solid and the shell is hard. They are full of milk, too, when young."

"Oh, Mother, do cocoanuts give milk, like whales?"

"The juice is called milk, but it isn't real milk. In most fruits and nuts the juice forms a part of the pulp; in the cocoanut it is separate and can be poured out like water. It makes a pleasant drink."

"But how can we get them down?" inquired Loys.

"Any boy will climb the tree for a bit," said the seamstress.

"What is a bit?"

"Four pennies," explained the woman.

Hearing that any boy could climb the tree, the brothers ran down to try it. Loys began, but soon found that his arms were not long enough to grasp the thick trunk; and though Halde cried, "Go ahead, Loysie," and tried to push him from behind, it was of no use.

Cook, seeing him, said: "Oh, my young massa, you can no do dat. If you want, my Sammy he climb like a kibihe."

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A Banana Orchard

Coffee Bushes are planted in the Shade of the Banana Trees

"What's that?"

"Dat's a creature dat walks down a tree head fo'most better nor on level ground."

"Do send for your boy at once," begged Loys.

"Ei, ei, what you say, child! Too much people go by now. Dem cocoanuts no cotton pods. Somebody head be cracked. I tell Sammy he come to-morrow early, early. You get plenty nuts an' I make cakes and sweeties for you."

Just then Mr. Francis entered the gate, and Halde, taking him by the hand, said, "Come and see the tall cocoanut tree we have found; it must be a thousand feet high."

"Oh, no, my Halde, that won't do!"

"How high do you think it is?" inquired Loys.

"We can easily measure it."

"Yes, when the boy goes up to-morrow."

"With much less trouble."

"How, then, Father?"

"Go to the kitchen and bring the rope which was around the packing cases."

Loys returned with the rope, and Mr. Francis told him to put it around the trunk of the tree.

"It is easy to do that," said Loys, as he obeyed, "but I meant the height of the tree."

"All in good time. But there goes the breakfast bell. Halde, fetch a small stone, and, Loys, do not lose the mark on the rope. When we have eaten, we will begin work."

CHAPTER XIII

TREES

"NOW, Father," cried both boys, as they saw Mr. Francis lay his knife and fork straight on his plate, "tell us the secret."

Mr. Francis smiled. "I noticed, when in the garden, that the tower of this house is about the height of the cocoanut tree. We will go to the top of the tower, tie the stone on our rope, drop it over the rail till it touches the ground, draw it up, measure it, and —"

But the children were already on their way to the tower, and Mr. Francis was obliged to stop talking and follow them.

"Come on the shady side," he said, quite out of breath as he reached the platform above, "the sun is very hot."

In a few minutes the line with the stone to make it heavy had been lowered to the ground, marked, and drawn back.

"Now place your eye on a level with the rail, and see how much of the tree is above it."

"I think we don't know," remarked Halde, doing his best to squint across the intervening space, one eye half shut and the other half open.

Mr. Francis in his turn looked along the rail and said, "The trunk is about two yards higher than the rail, and the branches three yards more.

"Before we go down," he continued, "notice how the long, feather-like leaves are bound to the tree by a band of fibres that one might take for coarse brown cloth. The nuts, as you see, grow in huge clusters and spring from between the leaf stalks. Blossoms and nuts in all stages of ripeness grow on the tree at the same time; it can be said never to cease bearing. When a leaf stalk is dead, it falls off, leaving those scars which give the trunk its roughness. Cocoanut trees generally lean to one side and are sometimes oddly twisted, for they like the open ground near the sea, where they are forever tossed by the wind, and their bushy heads are a great burden."

"Will you let the cook's boy climb the tree to-morrow?" asked Loys, on the way down.

"Certainly, if he comes. Now let us measure the rope."

The rope was laid on the dining room table, and Mr. Francis measured it with the yardstick.

"There, that gives us fourteen yards for the distance of the rail above the ground, to which we must add five yards. How many feet does that make?"

Loys called out, "Fifty-seven feet."

"Good! and the girth?"

This they found to be three feet seven inches.

"Now, as you cannot go out during the heat, try to tell me the difference between our oaks at home and cocoanut trees."

"Our trees," answered Loys, "have limbs growing out of the trunk, all the way up; while cocoanut trees have no limbs, but only a bunch of leaves growing out of the top."

"Right, so far. But a thing you have not noticed is that the trunk of the cocoanut is nearly the same thickness when the tree is small as when it is full grown; which, with its bushy leaf branches, gives the young tree the appearance of a huge brown radish coming out of the ground. The trunks of our trees are slender at first and gradually increase in thickness as they grow up."

"Yes, I remember. Why is that?"

"Oaks and chestnut trees get larger by adding layers of wood to the outside of their trunks. If one is cut across, you will see rings where the wood has been formed each year. They are called *outside growers*.

"Cocoanuts, palms, and bamboos grow from the inside and are called *inside growers*. They must begin by getting their full girth when young. Suppose a boy had to be as thick as a man, because he

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DRYING COFFEE

The Coffee is spread evenly over the Ground, and is soon dried by the Burning Tropical Sun

could only grow upwards; that is the way with the young palms."

"How funny!" interrupted Halde, comparing his slim little figure with his father's.

At five o'clock, the garden being in shade, Mr. Francis took the boys and measured two palms of different heights. These were not cocoanuts, but the cabbage-palms in which the vultures had made their home.

The first was seventy feet high, the second thirty-nine feet. The girth of the taller taken a yard from the ground was seven feet eight inches, that of the second, seven feet five and a half inches; so that the tall one was only two and a half inches larger around than its neighbor that was but a little more than half its height. A young palm in the group had split its bark trying to expand, like a growing boy bursting through his jacket.

It was all very well to know the height and girth of their trees, but the boys would rather have had the nuts. Loys presently went back to his first scheme and asked his father if he thought the monkey could pull off some nuts for them.

"I do not know what he could do," replied Mr. Francis, "but he is not likely to attempt anything so useful. If he ran away, perhaps that would be the best thing that could happen to us."

"No, indeed, we are very fond of our monkey.

Do you think, Father, you might take your gun and shoot a nut down?"

"Now, Loys, be a little patient. The whole town would think us crazy if I began shooting at cocoanuts. The cook has promised to bring her boy to-morrow, and he will get them down."

Unfortunately the boys were not to have their wish realized so soon. When dinner was served, the meat looked the color of ink. Mrs. Francis went down to investigate. Large pieces of wood were still burning in the oven, and flame and smoke swept out of its open door to find their way up the chimney. It was before this blaze that the meat had been cooked and a pudding was now blistering.

"Why did you not take the wood from the oven before baking the things, Cook?" questioned Mrs. Francis.

"Ei, ei, ma'am, people no bake widout fire in dis same country."

"Of course not; but once heated, the bricks keep warm enough to bake the food."

"Well, dat be queer for true, ma'am."

The answer was so stupid that Mrs. Francis felt certain the woman had never cooked in an oven before. This proved to be correct. The poorer class in British Guiana use a grated iron pot filled with charcoal for cooking, and it appears this was the only help to preparing food that the "master cook" had known.

Courtesy of American Geographical Society

PRIMEVAL FOREST OF THE ESSEQUIBO RIVER, BRITISH GUIANA

"You cannot remain with me," said Mrs. Francis decidedly. "Your cousin must come in the morning."

"My cousin, she hab a place already."

"Then why did she engage herself to me?"

"You see, ma'am, she more better favored 'an me, an' know de white people's way better, so she get de place for me, den me come."

"Well, you can also go!" exclaimed Mrs. Francis, provoked at the trick played upon her.

"No, me can't. Not for a month. Me engaged by de month, dat's the rule in dis country."

"I never engaged you at all."

"But me be here for true."

Mrs. Francis left the kitchen. In the evening she gave Carla two days' wages for the cook, with a message to her not to return. The woman threatened to bring the matter before the magistrate. However, she finally left, and the way being clear, Carla offered to get some one in time to make breakfast next day.

The family had to be content with a supper of bread and cheese; and what was still worse, the boys had no one to pick their cocoanuts in the morning.

CHAPTER XIV

A MONKEY EXPERIMENT

A CARPENTER came in the morning to put up a house for the monkey. The boys amused themselves watching the man as he worked; so did the monkey. The house consisted of a pine box with a hole in one end for the door, and a few boards over the top to make a pointed roof. Instead of resting on a post, it was set on two pieces of wood nailed to the mango tree.

When all was finished, the carpenter untied the monkey and carried him to his new lodging. Here Mr. Monkey seemed quite satisfied until the man left. He then examined the house carefully, inside and out, after which he busied himself tearing it to pieces. It was wonderful how the splinters flew. Splitting the ends of the boards with his teeth, he tore them with his hands, until nothing remained but the floor, where he sat on a pile of rubbish, chattering and winking his small bright eyes at the boys.

Hearing the children laugh, Mr. Francis came down and was surprised to see what had been done.

"Isn't he strong?" asked Loys, with pride.

"I do not think him a fit pet for you at all," an-

swered his father. "I must get rid of this beast as soon as possible."

"No, Father. He is such a clever monkey, we must keep him and teach him things. What is a good name for him?"

"Do you think a bad monkey ought to have a good name?"

"Ours is really a good monkey — he wishes to amuse us."

"You might call him Sapajou."

"Does that mean anything naughty?" asked Loys, doubtfully.

"No. It is the name given to all monkeys that have tails like his. He can wrap it around a branch and hold on with it as if it were a hand."

"That shows how sensible our monkey is. Now, there is the cat, she likes to climb trees, but she never thought of holding on with her tail."

"All monkeys," continued Mr. Francis, "cannot grasp with their tails, and some, like baboons, have only a short tail."

"Well, Father, when an animal has no tail, you cannot blame him for not holding on with it. But I blame cats; they have nice, long tails, but are too stupid to use them."

"Father," exclaimed Halde, "though I think Sapajou very clever, I would like a baboon also. They must look so funny with a stump of a tail."

"Baboons do not live in South America; they belong to Africa. We have about twenty different kinds of monkeys here, but none are like those across the sea."

"What do monkeys eat when they are in the woods?" inquired Loys.

"Fruits, seeds, vegetables, roots, nuts, wild honey, and small insects, such as spiders, beetles, and fleas. Monkeys in their turn are eaten by Indians and snakes; so that even on top of the highest trees they are not safe."

"Poor little things!" exclaimed Halde.

Mr. Francis, having business to look after, went out, and Loys thought this would be a good time to begin teaching Sapajou. He brought a bright-colored picture-book from the house, and with Halde's help piled some boxes beside the mango tree. These he mounted so as to be near his pupil.

But how to begin? Sapajou could not say the words after him, and when Loys pointed them out, the monkey would not trouble himself to look.

Loys now thought of making Sapajou point for himself, but was a little puzzled which hand to take, as the monkey had four. He finally chose the front right hand and tried to bend down the fingers in order to leave one free. The fingers all shut together, and when Loys straightened the first, they all followed. Loys tried this several times before he found that

they could not move separately. Meanwhile Sapajou became tired and made an end to the lesson by catching the book and climbing with it to where his master could not reach him. In a few minutes more it was torn into shreds.

"Oh, Loysie, what a pity!"

"I don't care, it was an old book, anyway."

"Father will be vexed."

"It was my own; Auntie gave it to me."

"She did not mean you to tear it up."

"I did not tear it. Next time I will make letters on wood, then Sapajou can't spoil them."

"Yes, he can. Look how he splintered up his house."

"That's so!" and Loys got down and stood thoughtfully watching the monkey bite the last page of the book into bits the size of snowflakes, which were falling in a white shower around the tree. By and by he said, "Halde!"

"What?"

"I think our monkey is very strong."

"Indeed he is."

"I believe he could pick cocoanuts."

"Mother says he is too little."

"She does not know how strong he really is. He could bite the stems as he did the boards of his box, and the nuts would fall of themselves."

"Do you think he would climb up?"

"He must! We have only to loosen his chain and coax him over to the tree. Then we will clap our hands and throw stones at him, until he is so angry that he will run up the trunk and bite off the cocoanuts to make them fall on us."

"Suppose they strike us?"

"We can run from under. Come, help me get the stones."

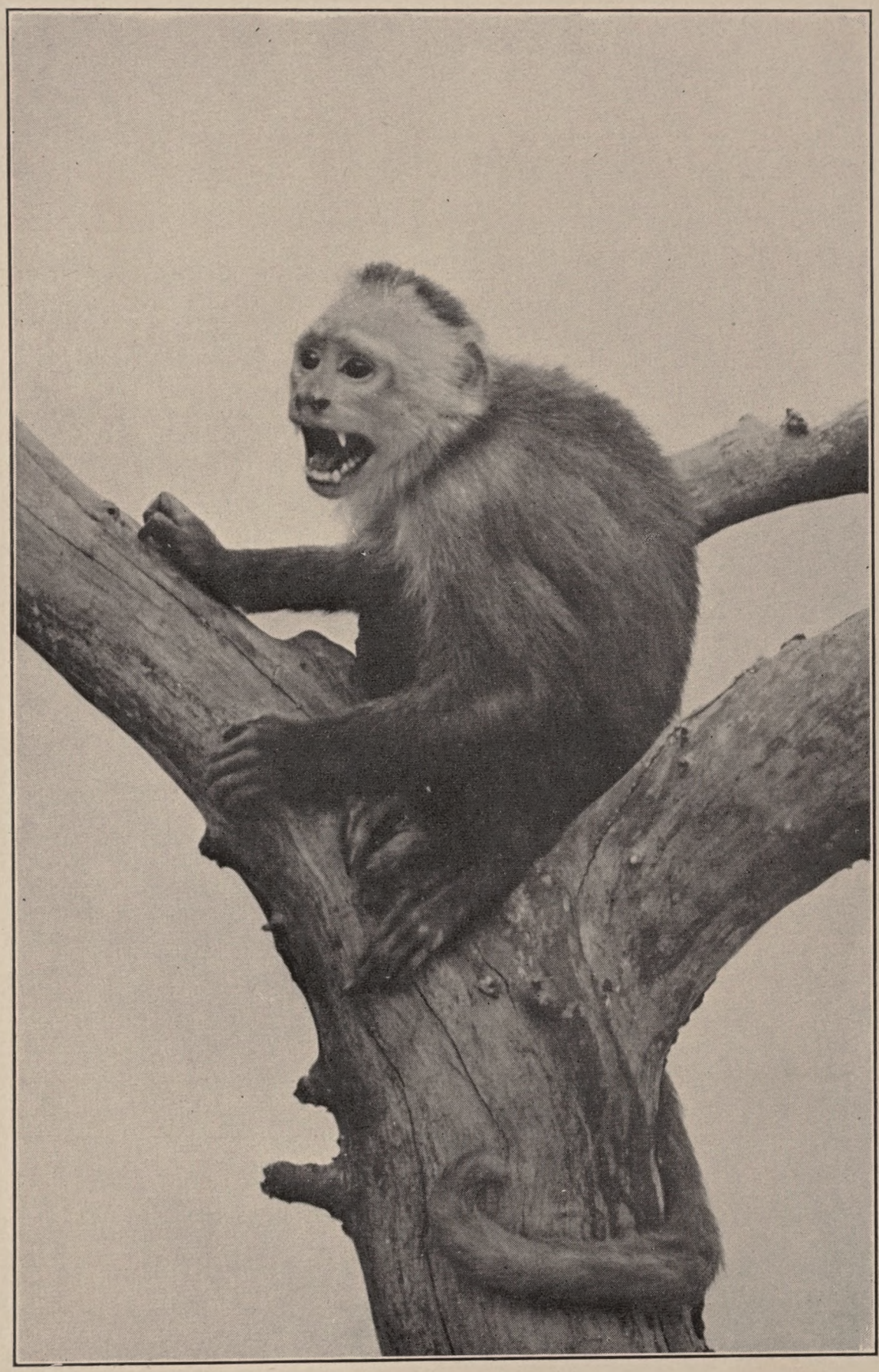
Halde did not enjoy the experiment; still, he went with his brother to look for stones. They were not easily found, as the walks in the garden were covered with small seashells instead of gravel. At last Halde discovered a few broken bricks and slates in a corner, while Loys gathered some mango seeds and old tin cans. These they laid in a heap under the cocoanut tree.

Loys now mounted the boxes and undid Sapajou's chain. The animal was very shy, expecting to be punished for tearing the book; but by gentle tugging and coaxing Loys got him to follow until they reached the desired spot.

Halde went on ahead, and patting the tree, called out, "Come, come, good monkey, jump." But Sapajou refused to budge.

Loys then caught Sapajou by the middle, set him on the sloping trunk, and clapped his hands. Finding himself free, the monkey climbed a little way and stopped.

"Pelt him, Halde, quick!"



Sapajou

Off went the brick. Fortunately it was only the size of a walnut, or the monkey might have been badly hurt. It struck him on the hind leg, but had a very different effect from that which the children expected. Instead of going up the tree, he turned, and seeing Loys stooping to pick up another stone, leaped on his back, where, furious with rage, he began to bite and tear hard enough to have brought down cocoanuts by the bushel, had it only been in the right place.

Both boys yelled with fright. The servants came running, and the new cook pulled off Sapajou, getting a bite on her hand in return. She dropped the animal, who sprang up a vine near by and entered the dining room window.

The next moment a great crash was heard; Sapajou had landed upon a shelf of tableware, and by the time Carla appeared with a broom much of the china and glass was in pieces.

When Carla rushed forward, he jumped over her head on to the dining table, and from it gained the chandelier. Here, with his tail wrapped around the gas pipe and every hand holding fast, he looked like an ornament not easily dislodged. Carla bravely mounted a chair; but the monkey, seeing that the broom could reach him, dropped lightly to the table again and with a bound was off through the window.

Mrs. Francis at the first alarm had gone to look after her boys, whom she found seated disconsolately on their pile of stones under the cocoanut tree.

"Are you hurt, children?"

"No," replied both, "but we are so frightened;" and Halde continued, "See how Loysie's blouse is torn."

Loys turned and showed his white flesh peeping through his ragged coat. The strong linen material had prevented the monkey from doing much harm, and only a few scratches could be seen.

Mrs. Francis took them into the house and asked the cook if she needed anything for her hand.

"No, missus, I have sucked the bite. It is not deep and does not hurt me; but I will put on a poultice to draw out the poison."

"Is a monkey's bite poisonous?"

"We think the bite of all wild animals is poisonous, and the poultice will do no harm."

"Well, I am glad the wicked beast is gone; and I hope he will not stop until he reaches the woods whence he came."

CHAPTER XV

MORE TROUBLE

THEY were not yet done with the monkey. Soon after breakfast Carla came in, saying a man wished to speak with the master. A Portuguese followed, who, with a deep bow, handed Mr. Francis a folded paper.

"What is this?" asked Mr. Francis.

"It's dat monkey," said the Portuguese, in his best English, which resembled somewhat the negro dialect.

"What monkey?"

"Your monkey."

"I do not understand."

"Me understan', me understan', very too well! Your monkey come in my shop trou de window. He climb up shelves. He knock down bottles, many bottles. Smash, smash, smash! All de good gin run out, de best gin in de town lay flat on de floor just like common trench water. You must pay me for it."

"How do you know the monkey is mine?"

"Man see he come out your window, den cross de garden into me shop. Me live over dere."

"But such a bill as this, twenty dollars! How long was he in the shop?"

"He in too long. Me try to out he fast, fast. Me take stick. My son take stick."

"Yes, and chased him around so as to break as many bottles as possible."

"Oh, no, massa. Me not know monkey belong to rich man. Me not want to spoil de good gin."

"Well, I will make some arrangement about it."

"Me don't want some arrangement. Me want money. Dere is plenty law in dis place."

"You shall have your money. I will go to-morrow and see how many bottles were broken."

It was a mistake that Mr. Francis had not gone immediately to count the bottles. When he arrived at the shop the next day he found such a pile of broken pieces, that a whole family of monkeys could not have done the damage. However, to save time and temper, he settled the bill.

Scarcely had the Portuguese left, when a red-faced German entered, carrying something wrapped up in a large bandanna handkerchief. Crossing the room slowly, he laid the bundle on the table.

"What have you here?" asked Mr. Francis.

The man untied the handkerchief, and pointing to a mass of screws and wheels, solemnly replied, "Dese is a clock."

"It is a queer clock," said Mr. Francis to his strange visitor.

"It was a queer beast dat made it like dese."

"A beast?"

"Yes, your monkey. When dey chased him out from de gin-shop, he climb up to de second story of my house where I keeps furniture an' tings for sale. Dis one clock stood on a table an' dat beast break it to pieces. If you pay to haf de clock put togeder, I ask notings more. I no watchmaker, I only sell tings."

"That is moderate enough. But where is the monkey now?"

"How should I know? When he see me, he went off trou de window."

"The beast will be my ruin! If I knew where he is, I would pay some one to shoot him."

"Oh, Father," exclaimed the boys, "our dear Sapajou!"

Mr. Francis paid the German and passed the day expecting to hear of some new monkey trick of the fugitive. Evening came, however, and nothing more was known of Sapajou for months. Doubtless he had been caught and kept as a pet by some one, who, like Mr. Francis, could not judge an animal by its face.

After tea, when the family were sitting in the gallery talking over the events of the day, Mr. Francis suddenly remarked, "I wonder how that monkey got loose this morning."

Nobody had thought of asking this question before. The boys looked at each other guiltily.

"Tell him," whispered Halde.

"He will be angry," returned Loys.

"Be brave, Loys. I am brave."

"Because you did not do it."

"I helped; I threw the stone. Say *we* did it."

"It is of no use to tell, unless I say the truth. You only did a little."

"I hit the monkey and made him jump."

"But I invented the whole plan. That was the very worst of all."

It was easier for the boys to blame themselves than to tell their father, and not until he asked what they were whispering about, did Loys find courage to say, "I wished to try an experiment."

"I threw the stone," added Halde.

"What experiment do you mean?"

"Sindbad the Sailor found apes that threw down cocoanuts. Mother said our monkey was too little to break the stems. But you often told us that we must not believe a thing cannot be done until we have seen it tried. There was the tree and the monkey just handy, and I thought we ought to try it, so I untied Sapajou."

"I pitched the stone," repeated Halde.

"Was that an experiment, also?"

"That was part of it. We wanted to make Sapajou angry, as they did in the 'Arabian Nights.'"

"I am afraid it was the cocoanuts, rather than the information, that you were after."

"We wanted both, but Sapajou spoiled the whole thing. Instead of climbing the tree, he jumped on my back; and now that he is gone, we will never know if a monkey can throw down cocoanuts, or not."

It had been a hard day for the children. Without wishing to do harm, they had caused a great deal of trouble and had lost their pet, besides. Mr. Francis took one on each knee. "My dear boys," he began, "was your experiment worth what it cost? The Portuguese wants twenty dollars, the German received five, and it will require ten to replace the broken glass and china in the dining room. Then there is also your torn coat, the cook's hand, the danger you were in, and our anxiety. Now what have you learned in return?"

The boys looked uncomfortably at each other and said nothing.

"You know an experiment is made in order to find out something. What have you found out from yours?"

"I wanted to know if monkeys could throw down cocoanuts, but Sapajou would not let me find out."

"And so all the money that I have spent is lost."

"I am very sorry, Father."

"Can't you think of anything?"

"Father," said Halde, sleepily, "won't you please think for us? We are so tired."

"I will, Halde, and you can tell me if I am right.

"First, experiments are not easy to make.

"Secondly, experiments may be very dangerous. Even prudent men have lost their lives by them.

"Thirdly, experiments must be made with great care and thought. Have you not learned all this to-day?"

"Yes, indeed!" answered both boys, with conviction.

"Then our troubles have been of some use. Now, I don't want you to stop making experiments or trying to find out things for yourselves; but you should ask either your mother or me to help you. Do you promise this?"

"We promise," repeated the boys, feeling as if a great load had been taken off their hearts, and Loys added, "Father, I think after all my experiment was a very good one; only the monkey was bad."

"We have had a day of monkeys. Do you know anything new about them?"

"They can bite!" said Halde, promptly.

"They have four hands and no feet at all," answered Loys; "and such funny hands! Sapajou could not point with his forefinger; it would not stay open without the others."

"Did you ever notice that we cannot close our little finger without the third finger bending, also?"

The boys tried, and laughed when they saw that,

in spite of their efforts, the third finger insisted on curling up.

"Why is that, Father?"

"The tendons of the third and fourth finger are joined together near the base, so that these fingers can only move together.

"I once knew a gentleman the tendon of whose little finger was separate from that of the third. He could do this trick, and while traveling among the Indians of our Western States he would often amuse himself showing them his accomplishment. They would also try to do it, and sometimes one would hold his little finger a long time with the other hand to make it stay down. But when he loosed it, up it would jump, to the great enjoyment of the other Indians."

"My little sons," interrupted Mrs. Francis, "it is time to go to bed. We have certainly had enough of monkeys for to-day."

"Father," whispered Loys, as he kissed Mr. Francis good night, "will you buy us another monkey?"

CHAPTER XVI

THE RAINY SEASON

IT had been very hot all morning; so hot that the air quivered above the red streets like over a stove. The sky was a blazing white, and the glare of the sun was so great that it made your eyes shrink.

"Is it not very warm for the end of January?" sighed Mrs. Francis.

"It is about to rain, ma'am; that is why it seems so close," answered Carla.

"I do not see how any rain can fall out of that clear sky."

Presently the wind began to come in little puffs. You could see no clouds, but the sunlight lost its brightness, and the pale sky gradually turned gray. The wind grew stronger; papers, magazines, table-covers, even the rugs on the floor, were caught and whirled about the room. Suddenly huge drops of rain splashed down. The sky still darkened and seemed to settle nearer the earth. The drops came faster, racing and crowding each other until the air was a heavy mass of water — the rainy season had begun!

"Oh, Loys," called Halde, who had hurried to the window, "come and see this cabman. Doesn't the rain pelt him!"

"There goes a man on a bicycle," added Loys, as he joined his brother. "The wheels throw the mud all over him."

"Look at that poor washerwoman with the basket of ironed clothes on her head. What a pity!"

"And that man trying to cover his tray of candy. It will all be melted."

Every minute some new funny sight made the children laugh: a boy hurrying along with an old flag wrapped around him, or another, still less fortunate, running with a leaky basket over his head as a shelter.

The donkeys and their drivers alone were not in a hurry — it is their business to be out, wet or dry. The animals trotted along, quite as if they did not notice the water dripping from every tuft of their long hair; while the drivers whistled as though unconscious of the cataracts that fell from their torn hats and jackets.

Ten minutes after the first drops had fallen scarcely any one could be seen in the street, even the police disappeared; and now the little darkey boys had a frolic.

A heavy rain makes the best of shower-baths. Few of the native children have more than a single

piece of clothing: a shirt, or an old coat borrowed from their elders. If this gets wet, it is easy for them to take it off and wait until it dries; but the more prudent take it off before coming out.

Away they went, leaping, yelling, and running like young savages. The warm drops trickled over them and glazed their smooth, black skin as they dashed along in a glorious race, tripping each other into some muddy pool or slipping and tumbling on the wet ground.

By this time the water had gathered on the lower levels. Tiny streams covered the road like the lines on a map, and the gardens became ponds knee-deep. Soon the house appeared to be standing in the middle of a lake, and an occasional cab splashing slowly by alone showed that the solid ground was still there.

"Why is it, Mother, that the water doesn't run off?" asked Halde, who was growing tired of the dreary scene.

"Water will not run up hill," answered Mrs. Francis, smiling.

"We know that, Mother."

"Then the rest is easy to understand. Georgetown lies on a flat strip of land, four feet below the level of the sea at high tide. A wall has been built along the coast to keep out the salt water. This wall also prevents the fresh water from escaping."

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THE PICKANINNIES' CANDY-SHOP

These Little Ones are as fond of Sugar-Cane as Loys and Halde are of Candy

"And must it remain here until the sun dries it away?"

"No; fortunately the tide of the ocean rises and falls. Sluices, or gates, have been placed at certain distances along the wall, and when the tide is out these gates are lifted and the city is drained. Where the water will not run off of itself they have pumping engines. I see by my paper that we will not have low tide until four o'clock to-day."

This was sad news for the boys, who wandered about the house trying to find something to do. Going back to their mother's room, they asked the seamstress how long the rainy season would last.

"About a month more. This is the short wet season."

"Mother, do you hear? The seamstress says it will rain a whole month longer. Isn't that dreadful!"

"It will not rain all the time," explained the woman. "In town the rainy season gives no trouble at all. You should see it in the country!" she added with an expressive nod.

"What does it do there?"

"You can see the cattle in the pastures barely able to keep their heads above water, or floating around dead; last year some farmers lost as many as a hundred a day. The provision grounds are

washed out, and the people sometimes are obliged to go about the villages in boats."

"I think it is a pity it rains at all," said Halde, feeling sorry for the cattle.

"Oh, my young master, we like the rain! In the same fields where the cattle drown in the wet season, they die of thirst during the dry season. If we had no rain, what would we do for water to drink?"

"There is plenty of water in the river."

"The sea makes it salt, and there are no wells here. The people have to store their water in vats like those in the garden."

"Can't you tell us a Nancy story while it is raining?" begged Halde, who was growing restless.

"Shall I tell you how Nancy paid his debts?" asked the seamstress.

"Oh, yes, do!" exclaimed both boys, sitting down beside her.

"Well, Nancy had five friends: Bo Corn, Bo Fowl-cock, Bo Dog, Bo Tiger, and Bo Huntsman. They were all enemies to each other, but trusted Nancy. To each of these friends Nancy owed money, and you may be sure the old rogue soon found a way to fool them. For this he told them to come to his house on a certain day and arranged that one should follow the other.

"Rap at the door. Nancy hollered out, 'Who deh?'

"'Bo Corn.'

"Nancy received Bo Corn politely, and after talking a little while he suddenly exclaimed, 'Me see Bo Fowl-cock comin' along de orange walk.'

"'He no frien' of mine. You go hide me quick!' replied Bo Corn.

"Nancy put Bo Corn in a big empty water jar and covered it with a lid.

"Rap at the door. 'Who deh?'

"'Bo Fowl-cock.'

"Nancy asked Bo Fowl-cock to come in, saying, 'Dis am sure a day ob pleasure; Bo Corn done jest been here, and now you come.'

"'Too bad I no see him, I kill dat Bo Corn for true!'

"Nancy, without a word, pointed to the water jar. In jumped the cock and ate the corn.

"Rap at the door. 'Who deh?'

"'Bo Dog.'

"'Bo Dog no frien' of mine,' whispered Bo Fowl-cock from the water jar. 'You go put de lid over me quick!'

"Nancy put the cover on the jar and opened the door. 'Hope you enjoy good health dis fine mornin', Bo Dog,' he said with a deep bow. 'Bo Fowl-cock an' me was jest talking 'bout you.'

"'If I meet dat Bo Fowl-cock, he done neber speak again,' growled Bo Dog, savagely.

"As an answer, Nancy slyly nodded towards the water jar, and with a bound the dog jumped into the jar and ate up the fowl.

"Just as he was about to come out, Nancy, shading his eyes with his hand, called to him: 'Me see Bo Tiger comin' along. So true, yes, I do.'

"Bo Dog said: 'Tiger an' me no frien'. Me stay here till he go 'way.'

"Rap at the door. 'Who deh?'

"'Bo Tiger.'

"Nancy opened the door. 'You done look mighty tired, Bo Tiger. Me got good fresh water in dat jar,' he said, winking to his visitor.

"The tiger jumped into the jar, and finding the dog, swallowed him up. He was still occupied with his meal when a shot was heard in the distance.

"'Ei, ei!' cried Nancy, 'dat am sure Bo Huntsman. He come dis way.'

"'Dis same jar hide me too well,' answered Bo Tiger. 'Me stay here till he go 'way.'

"Rap at the door. 'Who deh?'

"'Bo Huntsman.'

"'Come right dis way, Bo Huntsman. Come right dis way,' said Nancy. 'Mah goodness, but your hands am red wid blood, Bo Huntsman. You go hurry wash dem in dat water jar!'

"The hunter went to wash his hands, and when he saw the tiger, he shot him through the heart.

"'Dat Bo Tiger, he no dead yet. You take your knife and go after he,' urged Nancy.

"The hunter did as he was told, and while he was thus engaged, Nancy picked up Bo Huntsman's gun and shot him dead — so it was that Nancy paid his debts," ended the seamstress. "How do you like my story?"

"I don't like it a bit," answered Halde. "I think Nancy was a very bad man."

While they were talking, the rain ceased as suddenly as it had begun. In a few moments the dark sky had taken back its usual pale blue tint, and the sun was as hot as ever. The houses looked bright and clean after their drenching, the windows were opened and a pleasant air entered. But below, the water still lay waiting until the sea would give the signal for it to go.

This came at four o'clock. At first only a ripple could be seen on the surface, then an eddy and finally a current was formed. The higher bushes emerged one by one. The red streets again appeared, and the flower borders and foot paths returned slowly to their places, until at last the flood settled into the trenches, where it was busy the rest of the day moving steadily towards the sea.

By five o'clock the boys could take their usual walk. The sun had done its work as well as the rain, and there was neither dust nor mud. The streets

were filled with people. Darkey children amused themselves racing boats on the full trenches. Bits of bark, a leaf, or a stick were all they had, but there was as much rivalry and excitement as though they were sailing prize yachts.

"I think," remarked Mr. Francis, when the family were enjoying their walk, "that you now know what the word *drainage* means. If the people of Georgetown had not drained their city, we would still be prisoners in the house."

"Yes," agreed his wife, "and to-day we have seen our first tropical rain."

CHAPTER XVII

COCOANUTS

THE rainy season proved much pleasanter than the children had expected. Heavy showers came daily, and even several times a day, but after an hour or two of rain the hot sun would shine again, and quickly dry the ground. The flowers blossomed, the fruit ripened, and when the boys drove out, they saw the country looking so green that they soon understood why the people of the land were glad when the rainy season began.

Early one morning, as Loys and Halde were taking advantage of some fine weather to play in the garden, a black boy stopped at the gate. He was dressed in a rice bag turned bottom upward, with a hole in the centre for his head, and one at each side for his arms to come through. Seeing that no one paid any attention to him, the boy entered the garden and said gravely: —

"Me be lookin' for a business."

"There is no business here, we live in this house," answered Loys.

"Would you no like your cocoanuts be taken down, young massa?"

"Yes, indeed, we have been wanting them down all the time. But that isn't a business, is it?"

"Of course dat be a business!"

"Well, I must ask Father."

"Tell him dere be a gentleman at de gate dat will take down his cocoanuts very proper like for two bits."

Loys ran in and repeated the message, much to the surprise of Mr. Francis.

"The gentleman must be laughing at you, my dear. I don't think that a gentleman would climb a tree for money."

"He is really a black boy dressed in a funny brown bag, but he told me to say that he is a gentleman," explained Loys.

On hearing this, Mr. Francis went with Loys to the garden, and calling the boy, asked, "Are you the gentleman who is willing to pick our cocoanuts?"

"Me is, sir. Me pick dem for two bits and five dry cocoanuts."

"The seamstress said one bit is the price, but I suppose the services of a gentleman cost more."

"Oh, dem cheap niggers pick 'em any way! Me take 'em down superior."

"That is a high tree to climb."

"You jest done give me de instruments, an' me climb dat tree for true."

"What do you need?"

"Me need one piece of rope."

"I will get it," said Loys, who ran into the house and soon returned with the desired "instrument."

Having no coat to remove, nor sleeves to roll up, neither a hat nor shoes to trouble him, the darkey boy was soon ready to begin work. Cutting off about a yard of rope, he tied the ends together in a strong knot, then passing the rope around each foot at the instep, he stretched his feet apart so that the double line lay across the trunk of the tree. The rope thus held his feet pressed tightly against the bark whenever he bore his weight upon it, giving him a firm support.

It was a difficult climb. The trunk was forty-two feet high, and so thick that the boy's arms could not reach around it. Hugging the rough surface as best he could, he drew his knees forward, and after gaining a small space, rested on his feet while he caught higher with his hands; repeating the motion until he gained the top, where, after kicking off the rope, he disappeared in the great cluster of leaves.

Soon his voice was heard crying out for some one to keep watch.

"I do not know what he means," remarked Mr. Francis, puzzled at the request.

"Sir," said Carla, hurrying from the house, "I

must stand in the street to keep people from coming too near the fence. If a cocoanut falls on your head, it can kill you."

This reminded Mr. Francis that picking cocoanuts was somewhat different from taking in a crop of apples at home. He had no sooner called the children to a safe distance and stationed Carla on guard than the nuts came tumbling in all directions.

They made dents in the walks, buried themselves in the flower beds, crashed through the bushes, jumped, bounced, and rolled along the ground, doing no end of damage. Even an iron point of the gate was broken off by a cocoanut's falling upon it. Mrs. Francis, whom the noise brought to the window, became nervous lest there should be an accident.

"Mother, this is a battle, and these are the cannon-balls," shouted Halde.

"I hope no one will be wounded," replied Mrs. Francis.

It looked as if this might easily happen; for, in spite of Carla's warning, a crowd of black children had gathered outside in hopes of getting a few stray nuts. When one fell upon the road, half a dozen boys would dart after it, and in their struggles quite forget that another might follow at any moment.

After the higher bunches were twisted off, a number of nuts still remained at the base of the tuft. These were so thickly overhung by the great leaves that it

seemed impossible to reach them. Presently two bare feet were seen emerging from the green cluster. The boy, straddling one of the thick leaf-branches, began kicking at the low nuts with his heels. In this way he went around the tree until all the nuts had fallen.

Sliding to the ground was an easy matter for one who did not mind the rough trunk — here the coarse rice bag was of service. The rope was not needed for the descent.

The danger being over, about a dozen of the children outside rushed through the gate and offered to carry the nuts into the house. Carla quickly ordered them back, but did not succeed in getting the yard cleared until the foremost had managed to run off with some of the spoils. A black policeman finally came and scattered the crowd, and Carla triumphantly took the nuts into the store-room. There were seventy-three in all, and as cocoanuts can be picked twice a year, this would make a hundred and forty-six nuts that the tree could bear each year.

Loys and Halde begged Carla to open a nut that they might taste the milk and jelly. She took one still green, and getting a large knife from the kitchen, cut away the husk and bored through the thin shell.

The milk filled a tumbler. It looked like whitish

water and tasted sweet. The jelly resembled thick cream. It could easily be seen that the milk, the jelly, and later the hard pulp are the same; the only difference being that the last has become older and firmer than the first. This fine-flavored white pulp, for which the cocoanut is so much valued, serves to give the young tree food until the shell breaks and the roots fasten themselves into the ground.

Mr. Francis paid the boy his two bits and gave him the five dry cocoanuts he had bargained for. The dry nuts are those in which the pulp is hard, and are the only ones that are sent to other countries. The transaction over, Loys went with the cocoanut picker to see him off.

"Look, a boat!" exclaimed the boy, as he reached the gate.

"Where?"

The boy showed Loys a brown pod that had fallen from the cocoanut tree. It was about a foot long and pointed at one end like a canoe, while the other end, where the stem had been attached, remained open. This was really not a pod at all, but a spathe; the difference being that pods hold the seeds of plants and spathes cover their flowers.

Whatever its use, the spathe made as pretty a canoe as any one could desire. High at each end, it curved down towards the middle, and its smooth, ribbed surface looked as if finished by a careful

workman. One might easily believe that the Indians had taken these spathes as the model of their bark canoes.

"I wish it was closed at the other end," said Loys, as he stood admiring it.

"Me will soon do dat, if you get me a big needle," answered the boy.

Loys ran upstairs and asked his mother for the needle.

"You must first have your breakfast," she answered, "and meanwhile the boy may go to the kitchen and get something to eat."

During breakfast Loys was so quiet that his father asked him the reason.

"I am thinking of James," he replied.

"Who is James?"

"The black boy downstairs. He is a very intelligent boy."

"How so?"

"You saw the way he climbed the tree, and he also knows how to make a boat."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, Father. You have often told me that all knowledge is not found in books; his knowledge is not in books, but it is very useful. Had he not known how to climb the tree, we could not have gotten the cocoanuts."

"He has what is called practical knowledge."

Loys, encouraged by his father's answer, brought out the request he had wished to make since the beginning of the conversation, "Will you let him come every day and teach us things, Father?"

"Oh, Loys, that is not a boy for you to play with!" objected his mother.

"If he only had a suit of clothes, he would be a very nice boy," affirmed Loys, stoutly.

"If that is all he needs," said Mr. Francis, smiling, "I will give him one of my old suits; the seamstress can alter it to fit him. But we must find out whether he has a good character. Otherwise he may teach you more harmful things than good ones."

The boys hurried off to tell James of his good fortune and to watch him finish the boat.

The black boy asked for a kitchen knife and went through the garden with a grand air collecting his "instruments." He began by cutting a thick, pointed leaf about a yard long from a plant growing near the fence.

"What is that for?" inquired Loys.

"String!" was the brief reply.

The children looked on in wonder as James stripped the leaf and removed from its wet pulp long fibres that were as strong and smooth as coarse thread. These he laid in the sun to dry. He next picked up some of the cocoanut leaves strewn below the tree and took out their midribs,

which were about half a yard long and very flexible. He also cut some of the leaves into strips.

"Me mus' hab a little pine wood for de seats and de paddles," he remarked.

"Which tree is that?"

"It no grow here, but de cook hab some pieces to light de coal-pot."

The pine wood was brought, and James, having finished his preparations, trimmed the stem end of the spathe and sewed it shut with the fibre and needle. Next pine seats at the middle and rear end were fitted in. Between these the ribs of cocoanut leaf were bent to form a round awning about four inches high. Other ribs were placed lengthwise, and on these were laid strips of leaves, making a pretty thatched roof. The whole was sewn tight or bound with fibre, and two paddles completed the canoe.

"You forgot the sail!" criticised Halde.

"Wood-skins hab no sails, you paddles 'em."

"What is a wood-skin?" asked Loys.

"When a boat be of bark, Indians call dat same boat a wood-skin."

"What a funny name!"

"Ain't bark de skin of a tree, an' ain't a tree wood? Dat makes wood-skin for true."

"So it does! The Indians must be clever to think of that."

"Of course dey clever. How dey live without clever? Dey hab no Buckra to tink for dey."

"Who are the Buckra?"

"White men. Indians make sail, too, out of reeds tied together wid fibre. But dem sail be only used for dug-outs."

"I don't know what a dug-out is."

"A boat. She make of tree, dug out."

"Dug out of the ground?"

"Ei, ei! Dey cuts 'em down first, to be sure, an' den dey digs 'em out wid an axe, or burns 'em out de shape of a boat. You don't know much for true, young massa."

"I know many things that you don't!" replied Loys, offended. "Now I suppose you think the sun rises every morning."

"Ebery fool know dat."

"Well, it doesn't!"

"Ei, ei! what Nancy story you tell deh?"

In a few minutes the boys' discussion grew so loud that Mr. Francis came down and, to end the quarrel, sent James away.

Loys went to his mother, and after telling her what had happened, said: "I think you were right to be careful. James has a very bad character."

"No, my boy. James was boasting a little, which is not polite; still it does not show a bad character. Though you blame him, you did the same."

Meanwhile Halde had made a new play, setting up some tenpins and knocking them down by rolling one of the big cocoanuts at them. Mr. Francis picked it up and called the boys to him: —

"You, Loys, bring the scales and let Halde fetch the weights. We will find out what burden our cocoanut tree had to carry."

The boys did as requested, and the cocoanut, which was of an average size, was found to weigh twelve pounds.

"Now, there were seventy-three nuts on the tree," continued Mr. Francis, "and we can count each nut as twelve pounds. Which of you can tell me how many pounds that makes?"

"Eight hundred and seventy-six pounds," cried Loys, after a little while.

"Good! And if to this we add the weight of the leaf-branches, it would make over a thousand pounds."

"No wonder our poor cocoanut tree couldn't stand up straight!" exclaimed Halde, who was still panting from the exertion of his game.

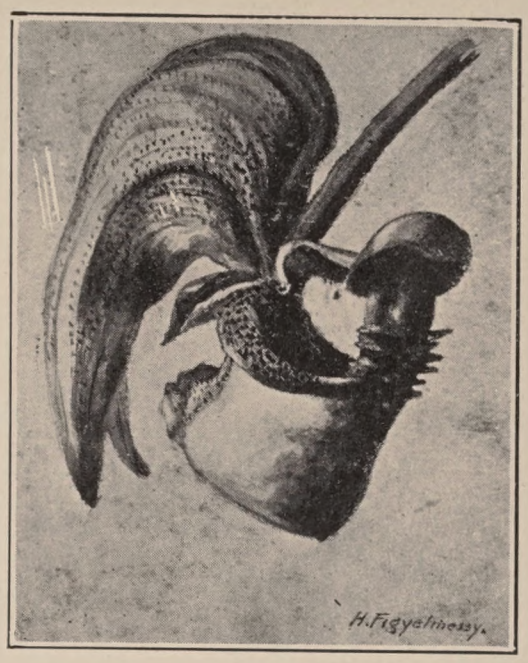
CHAPTER XVIII

IN A TROPICAL GARDEN

AFTER the wet weather began, scarcely a day passed that the boys did not find some new curiosity in the garden.

One morning Mr. Francis called them downstairs. "Here is a strange plant," he said, pointing to a bunch of leaves springing from the tops of several green bulbs that were fastened by white tendrils to the bark of a tree.

Two flowers hung on a forked stem that grew from another bulb. They were in the form of a flat-bottomed cup, two inches deep and two and a half wide. The rim of each was rolled back and stippled with reddish brown spots, while the rest of the cup was cream-white. At the front rose a glistening, orange-colored mass about the size and shape of a man's finger; and opposite to this, where the stem started, fluttered two gauzy pink wings. A delicate bridge spanned the top, joining the rear of the cup with the orange horn in front. In the middle of the bridge were two points from which drops of a sweet,



THE HELMET ORCHID

THE LADY-SLIPPER ORCHID

sticky liquid were constantly falling into the cup below.

"Is it really a flower," whispered Halde, "or a lizard, or a young dragon just hatched?"

"It is a flower, and you have not yet seen the most singular part of it." Mr. Francis lifted the boys in turn, so that they could look into the cup, where some bright green flies were busy sipping the liquid it contained.

"Now I will explain what a cunning flower this is. Here, at the back, near the bottom of the cup, is an opening where the seeds and a yellow dust called pollen are formed. The seeds must be covered over with pollen to make them grow; and how do you suppose this is done?"

"Tell us, Father."

"These green flies carry it."

"Oh, Father! the flies could not know about the yellow powder and the seeds."

"The flies do the work without knowing about them. This brilliant yellow horn shines through the leaves of the forest and attracts the flies. They settle upon the horn, crawl on the bridge, and taste the drop of liquid. Many come, crowd each other, and buzz down to the bottom of the cup, where they sip their fill. Their feast ended, they seek a way out, find this hole at the back of the cup, and creep through it, at the same time brushing off the

pollen dust which remains sticking to their wet heads."

"But how do they put the dust on the seeds?"

"In time they get hungry, go into a flower as before, and again wish to leave. The place where the seeds are kept is sticky, and when the fly's head touches it the dust is taken off. Then, presto! the seeds begin to swell, grow, and ripen, until they are scattered by the winds or dropped by birds into the rough bark of trees, to become new plants."

"I did not know a flower could be so clever," said Loys.

"This kind of plant is called an orchid, and the one you see is named the Helmet orchid, because the cup with its rolled brim is shaped somewhat like the bronze helmets that soldiers of old used to wear.

"All orchids have odd shapes, and most of them have bright colors or a strong perfume in order to attract the insects that carry the pollen to their flowers. Each orchid has a special kind of insect to do this for it. Some have ants, some wasps, others bees, moths, or butterflies. Ours has this bright green fly that I have never seen about the garden until the flower was in bloom. From where the fly comes, or how it finds the plants when they are in town far from the places where they usually grow, is another wonder that cannot be explained."

Halde, who never remained long quiet, had been wandering about the walks and now ran up, saying, "I see plenty of orchids on other trees; and isn't it funny, a mango tree is bearing orchids also?"

"No tree bears orchids. They are separate plants, and simply live on trees as you live in a house. They thrive equally well if tied to a piece of rough dead wood, and in this way can be taken to distant countries.

"Sometimes they are hung in lattice boxes filled with broken brick and dead moss. All that they need is a support for their white tendrils, warm, moist air, and light. In the forests they are mostly found on the banks of rivers and creeks; and many are so covered by ants that collectors are obliged to tow them long distances in the water behind their boats to get rid of the little pests."

"What do the plants live on?" asked Loys.

"Air, water, and sunlight."

"It is certainly a queer flower, to be able to live on nothing at all."

"Do you call air and water nothing?"

"Loys, Loys!" called Halde, "come here. Do look at this dear little bird, its feathers shine like the stones in Mother's ring."

"Where is it?" asked Loys, joining his brother.

"There. It has its bill in that white flower. Its wings quiver like a bee's. Now it is gone!"

"It must be a humming-bird. Never mind, you will see one some other time," said Mr. Francis.

"I see it again," shouted Halde, "on that tiny branch. It is smoothing its feathers with its bill, just as if it were a real bird."

"It is a real bird," returned Loys. "I see it too. Doesn't it shine? Its back is bright green, and its breast is red, like copper. It is following a little butterfly, and now snaps it up. Halde, why do you think the bird isn't real?"

"Because it is so pretty, just like a fairy."

"Being a real bird does not make it less pretty, does it?"

"No, but if it were a fairy, it might do all kinds of things for us."

"Knowledge is our modern fairy, Halde," said his father. "Come upstairs, and I will tell you a story I have read about a plant and a bird."

When they were seated in the cool gallery, Mr. Francis began: "Humming-birds live partly on honey and are fond of bell-shaped flowers, in which they can put their long bills. Their tongues are made of two hollow tubes placed side by side. They suck through these as you might through two straws.

"In the same country where humming-birds live is a vine orchid called the vanilla. It takes root in the earth and climbs by its tendrils up the trees, from

Coolie Women and Children working in the Fields

which it hangs in loose festoons. Its flowers are white, bell-shaped, and sweet smelling. Humming-birds love these beautiful clusters and thrust their bills into the deep cups to feed, at the same time carrying the yellow powder from plant to plant, as insects do for other orchids. Could anything be prettier than the plant feeding the bird and the bird in turn helping the plant to grow? Could a fairy do more?"

"No, Father, it is almost as if the dear little birds were fairies; maybe they are."

"Yet with the aid of knowledge we do not need the humming-bird's help. The seeds of the vanilla grow in a pod, which, on account of its fine flavor, is used in cooking. For this reason the vine is much sought after, and people tramped the woods with great difficulty collecting the beans. Then it was found that vanilla could be grown in quantities like other plants, provided the vines had trees to support them; but who could make the birds come and do their part of the work?"

"Build a cage around the vines," suggested Halde.

"A simpler way was discovered. Some one tried shaking the pollen on the part where the seeds lay hidden, and when the life-giving dust touched them, the seeds swelled and grew, just as in their native forests. Now, large plantations of vanilla are cultivated, not only in South America, but also in

the Pacific Islands and India, where no hummingbirds live. Each morning the planters go through the rows of vines, sprinkling the yellow pollen from flower to flower; for although the plants can be raised from cuttings, the seeds and their pods will never form without pollen."

Mr. Francis went out, and the children played in the dining room. When the cocoanuts had been taken down, a number of young ones, no larger than a walnut, fell with the others. These the boys used for marbles. They were rather big, and not very round, but were good enough to practise with. Loys had seen in the streets a new way of playing marbles and wished to learn it.

The marble is held between the thumb and first finger, or the first and second fingers, of the left hand. Then the first or the second finger of the right hand is placed behind it, pressed back and brought suddenly forward, which gives force enough to drive the marble thirty feet or more. It is difficult to aim with certainty, but many children become exceedingly skilful at hitting the mark.

Loys and Halde missed every shot, and hearing James in the kitchen, they asked their mother if he might come and show them how to aim.

"If you do not quarrel," assented Mrs. Francis.

"You pitch marbles wid cocoanuts, ei, ei!" exclaimed James, on entering the room. "You give

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COOLIE BOYS ON A WEST INDIAN FARM

They have brought their Humped Cattle from their Native Land. The Picture in the Upper Right-hand Corner shows the Coolie Way of pitching Marbles

me a bit, me buy real marbles and show you how to pitch superior."

Halde ran to his mother and soon returned with fourpence. James took the money, and going as far as the gate, changed it for some marbles that he already had in his pocket. These he brought to the boys. Then marking a circle on the floor and placing five marbles within it, he explained the rules of the game: —

"Me let you stand here, me go way back here. De little massa pitch three times, you twice, me once, each round. Dat's what we call odds; me is a gentleman. What you hit you takes, what me hits me takes, all fair. Now begin."

The children were satisfied with this arrangement; but as James never missed, and they never hit, the marbles soon followed the bit into his pocket.

"We do not play marbles in this way at home," said Loys, a little ashamed of his lack of skill.

"Dis am de coolie way. White people no play dis way, neither black people, except dey learn."

"What is a coolie?"

"Dat am a fool question," replied James; "a coolie am a coolie."

"It is not a foolish question, but it is a foolish answer. There comes Father, I will ask him."

"A coolie," explained Mr. Francis, "is a laborer brought from India or China. In the Hindustani

language the word means a laborer. There are many of them working on the sugar estates here."

"Father, let James show you how they shoot marbles."

James put a marble on the floor, and aiming at it from a distance of two yards, hit it with such force that it broke in two. Pleased by the praise he received for his skill, the boy then drew a sling shot from his pocket, placed a marble in it, and going to the window, pointed it at a little kiskadi sitting on the garden fence. Suddenly he let the elastic snap and sent the marble straight for the bird, striking it dead.

"How cruel!" cried Halde. "Father, why did you let him do it?"

"I did not know he intended to kill the bird. James, you put your sling shot to a very bad use."

"Don't fret, massa, plenty more birds."

"Suppose some one were to kill you and say, 'Plenty more boys,' would you like it?"

"Ei, ei! massa, me's no bird."

"How could you do it!" said Loys, indignantly.

"Me show you how;" and James began to put another marble in place.

"No, no! I don't mean that. Father, do send James way."

"Now ain't dese Buckra queer," remarked James, talking to himself as he walked off. "De fuss dey make is bigger 'an de bird heself."

"Father," said Loys, thoughtfully, before going to bed that evening, "I have been thinking of James, and I believe he did not even know he had been cruel. How can that be?"

"Because he thought only of himself and not of the bird. If we wish to be just, we must think of the feelings of others."

CHAPTER XIX

ORCHIDS AND VINES

AFTER the day they saw the Helmet orchid, the boys ran to the garden the first thing every morning in search of other flowers. Some time passed when Halde found an orchid even more beautiful than the Helmet.

"Oh, Father, oh, Loysie, do come! Here are Cinderella's slippers. Surely a fairy must have made them."

When Mr. Francis saw the plant, he was as much pleased as the little fellow. Mother also had to be called to look at this new wonder.

It was what is known as the Lady's-slipper orchid. As with the Helmet, two winged flowers hung from a long, forked stem. They were really just like tiny slippers with pointed toes, and looked as if made of shining milk-white glass, with a touch of red on the top edges. These dainty flower-shoes measured three inches in length.

Mr. Francis became so much interested in orchids that one day, seeing a quantity for sale, he bought a cart-load of them. They were already growing on

pieces of wood and could be hung in the gallery. There are at least a hundred different kinds of orchids found in British Guiana, and though his collection was not complete, it contained many varieties.

Some of the blossoms were as delicate as rose leaves and withered in a few hours; others remained in bloom for a month or two. One plant threw out a whiplike shoot three yards long, with branches bearing each from five to ten flowers the shape and size of yellow bees. More than three hundred could be counted on a single plant; and this swarm of flower-bees did not fade for six weeks. A large cluster of purple-red blossoms was equally lasting, and a bunch of flowers which looked like violet velvet sprinkled with gold dust continued bright and fresh even longer.

"Father," asked Loys one day, "could we not send orchid seeds to Auntie and let her plant them at home?"

"We could do so, but it requires time, patience, and great skill to raise orchids from the seed. What would you think of waiting seventeen years for a plant to blossom? A special house must be built where the same heat and dampness can be kept up all that time, before even one little bud appears."

"No person would take as much trouble as that."

"It has been done, and many fine and new varieties

are produced in this way. However, an easier plan is to divide the plant itself. A good-sized plant can be broken into two or three pieces, each one of which will increase and flower until it can be again divided. From England men are sent at great expense all over the world to collect orchids. We were fortunate in being able to get ours with so little trouble."

"Father, you are very right to get orchids," interrupted Halde, "but it will be just as hard to get animals, and monkeys, and birds, when we go back to the States; and yet you do not buy any of them for us."

"That is true, Halde," assented Mr. Francis, "and when I see an animal for sale you may be sure I will not let the chance go by."

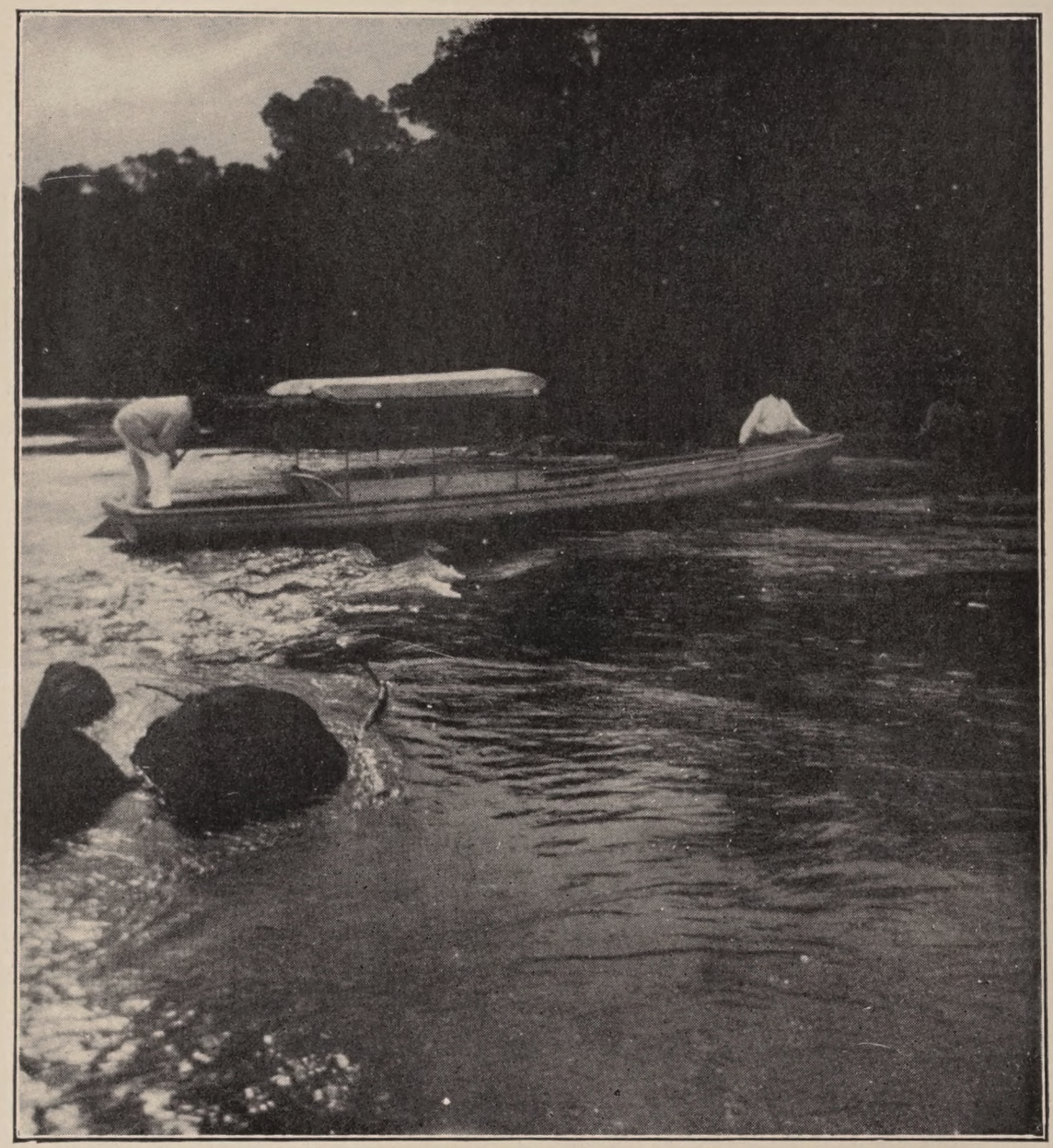
"Thank you, Father, I like curiosities that are alive."

"Are not plants alive?"

"Yes, but I mean those that move around and do things."

The gallery was a pretty sight. Besides the orchids, it contained a number of ferns and small palms; while vines crept up from the garden through the open windows, each bringing a bouquet in season.

Many of these vine flowers are bell-shaped and of the most gorgeous hues: flaming yellow, deep crimson, white, pink, blue, lilac, and purple, growing in clusters that would alone make a nosegay.



Courtesy of the American Geographical Society

PULLING THROUGH THE RAPIDS

These Men are on their Way Home from the Gold Mines

South America is a land of vines. In the forests you see them as slender as whip-cords, or as thick as a man's body. Tough and rugged, or green and tender, you find them running up, down, or across the trees, forming such a tangle that it is a puzzle to tell which end is top or bottom. Sprouting from the ground, they reach to the top of the highest mora; but if a bird drops seed in a notch above, they climb downwards and take root below. They seem to care as little about their position as would a monkey. Even plants that are stay-at-home and well behaved in other countries take to climbing in the tropics like a schoolboy.

Mr. Francis pointed out to the boys one of these emancipated vines in the garden. "Do you remember the lilies at Bywater?" he said, "stiff-looking plants, a few feet or less in height. They are inside growers, and inside growers are usually stiff. What do you think of this Southern lily?"

The children saw some starlike flowers. Those just opened were of a pale green that deepens into a flame-colored mixture of yellow and scarlet as they grow older. Each leaf ended in a curling tendril by which the plant could hold on, and to the children's surprise this lily, as if ashamed to be out of the fashion, was awkwardly climbing with many joints and angles after its vine neighbors.

"The large vines of the forest are called bush-

rope," continued Mr. Francis, "and are stronger than any rope. One of my friends, a gold-digger, built a small cabin in the interior. A clearing had to be made around the cabin, and he set men to felling trees. These were tightly interlaced with bush-rope, and after one of the trees had been cut through, it swung above the cabin roof, held in mid-air by a vine.

"The surrounding trees were difficult to climb and the vines formed such a tangle that no one knew where to begin cutting in order to release the tree. Near the top of the hanging tree was an open space where an axe could have made its way through the bush-rope; however, the man cutting it would have fallen with the tree."

"What did your friend do, move the cabin?" asked Halde, who believed in decisive measures.

"Wherever he would build it, trees must be felled, and the same thing might happen again. He found another way out of the trouble, — like the way you wanted me to get cocoanuts."

"Did he shoot the tree down, Father?"

"He sent a ball with his rifle into the middle of the vine and made a hole through it large enough to show daylight; however, the fibres still held. Another ball cut to the right of the hole; and yet, though not more than one inch of wood remained, there was no sign of its breaking. Still another cut

to the left; then the whole mass swung slowly away from the cabin, and the weight of the tree gradually sank it lower and lower, until the men were able to manage it."

"I wish your friend would come and tell us stories. What else did he do?"

"He shot pumas, monkeys, and big snakes, and he told me another singular thing about these bush-ropes. Some of them prepare for the dry season by filling their porous fibres with water, as the camel fills his stomachs. Travelers frequently satisfy their thirst by tapping these vegetable water-carriers. My friend cut again and again into different ones, without ever getting a drop of water, until he finally thought the account was a fable. At last he spoke to his boat captain, an old woodsman, on the subject. The man said there were plenty such vines near by.

"'I have tried all that are about here,' replied my friend.

"'That one over there?'

"'Yes.'

"What was my friend's surprise, when the man went and cut out a piece of vine about three feet long, which in a few moments was dripping with water.

"Then my friend remembered that he had always made but a single cut in each vine; and as no air could enter, the water would not flow."

"I would like to go into the interior," said Loys, as his father finished the story.

"The forest is too dangerous for boys. People are obliged to travel most of the way in open boats. There are falls in the rivers over which the boats must leap, and plenty of alligators always ready to snap up any one who might fall overboard.

"You sleep in hammocks, exposed to all kinds of weather; and in the morning when you pick up your boots you are likely to see a scorpion or a venomous black spider jump out of them. On the trail, pumas, jaguars, and snakes help to make the journey lively; and if you escape all these dangers there is still the deadly fevers of the tropics which may attack you. It would be impossible for you to bear such traveling, but we can bring the interior to us."

"How it that, Father?"

"By collecting all the animals, plants, and interesting things we can find."

CHAPTER XX

HUMMING-BIRDS AND ANTS

ONE morning Loys was seen in the arbor at the end of the garden making signs for the family to come.

"Look," he whispered, as they joined him, "it is a humming-bird's nest, and the little mother is sitting upon it."

So many visitors frightened the bird. She flew away, giving them an opportunity to examine the nest. It was the size of a walnut and built of earth mixed with silk-cotton fibres — this is a material like the down on thistle seeds. The inside, too, had been partly filled with silk-cotton, and upon this soft bed lay two tiny white eggs, each a quarter of an inch long. The walls of the nest were smoothly finished on the outside, and the whole was neatly fitted into a forked branch of a vine.

"It is made of the shell dust in the walk, which gives it this pale yellow color," said Mr. Francis. "But come away, the little mother is anxious to get back. Do you see her?"

"Yes, over there. She is not as pretty as the one I found the other day," remarked Halde; "she is green all over."

"Not all over, Halde. Her wings are black and the middle of the tail is black with a brown feather on each side."

"Hasn't she a long bill!" exclaimed Loys.

"I have seen them as long as the bird itself, though not here. There are no less than four hundred different kinds of humming-birds, and some have been given pretty names, such as Wood-star, Sunbeam, Flame-bearer, Emerald, Sapphire, Comet, Hermit, and Coquette. An old French writer calls them 'gilded birds,' and an Englishman speaks of them as 'flying gems.' Even the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians had words for them in their language meaning 'Rays of the Sun' and 'Tresses of the Day-star.'"

The boys now had a new interest in the garden, where they watched the nest daily. If the mother bird left her eggs to get a moth or a drop of honey to eat, the father bird sat upon the nest until her return. Finally, out came two little things no bigger than bees.

When learning to fly, one of the baby birds lodged in a cobweb, and a great fat spider began spinning threads around it until the poor little thing could not even flutter. Loys, seeing the danger, ran and

brought a broom with which he gently set the prisoner free.

It was funny to watch the little birds gravely sitting on the tip of a branch small enough for their tiny feet to hold, looking for flies and moths. Their eyes, no bigger than pinheads, were quick to see; and nothing passed by without their whizzing after it like a swift ball of feathers blown by the wind. Though their wings were so delicate they could hold themselves in the air, quivering before a flower and sucking until the cup was empty. The only thing that these feathered jewels lack is the gift of song. Their voice is very faint and resembles the chirp of a young chicken.

When the nest was empty, Mr. Francis allowed the boys to cut down the branch and hang it in the gallery.

"Would you like to see a great quantity of humming-birds?" he asked as they finished their task.

"Yes, indeed, where could we find them?"

"We would have to travel a good deal to see them all; for though the greater number and the most beautiful live in the tropics, they are scattered over the American continent, from Terra del Fuego in the south to Alaska in the north. What I mean is for us to go to the public library where there is a fine book on humming-birds."

"I would rather travel about," remarked Halde.

"I would like to look at the book, and when we travel we can search for humming-birds also," said his brother.

"Very well, we will go to-morrow to the library."

It was a wonderful book, filled with pictures of humming-birds, so well done that even the lustre of their shining feathers was perfect. Their tiny nests, the bright flowers among which they feed, and bits of the Southern countries where so many of them live were also given. It was almost the same as seeing the living birds.

Mr. Francis told the children to look with their eyes and not with their hands, and turned the leaves himself that the book might not be soiled.

"To destroy or mar a work of this kind," he explained, "is like killing or wounding it, and we must think of the trouble and labor some one has taken to create it."

"How long do you suppose it required to make this book?" asked Loys.

"Here is something the author, Mr. John Gould, has written of the time he spent upon it: 'Twelve years of incessant labor and not less than twenty years of interesting study.' What do you think of that?"

"He must have been very tired," answered Halde.

"Very likely he was at times, but he adds that his pleasure on seeing a humming-bird was as great

at the end of the twenty years as at the beginning. He had great love and great patience."

They had spent an hour very pleasantly at the library, when Mr. Francis said, "It is enough for one time, but we will come again, for you must remember that a thing which takes a long time to make should take a long time to see."

A few days later the boys had an experience which gave them an idea of at least one of the hardships that beset the traveler in South America. One morning they asked their mother if Carla might carry their chocolate and toast into the arbor. Mrs. Francis having no objection, they brought out a small table and two chairs.

"It is almost like Robinson Crusoe," said Loys, as they seated themselves, "and nicer than being in the house."

"Yes, if we only had some animals about to make us feel lively. Poor Sapajou!" Halde had scarcely finished speaking when he began jumping up and down.

"What is the matter?" inquired Loys.

"Something is biting me. Oh, Loysie, look inside my coat, on my arms, now on my back. Do hurry!"

Before Loys could do anything for his brother, he also felt himself bitten, and began to shout and jump, until the noise brought Carla and Mrs. Francis to the arbor.

"I see nothing, what can it be!" exclaimed Mrs. Francis, frightened without knowing why.

"Stinging ants," answered Carla, briefly. "Go quickly to the bath-room and I will get you other clothes."

The table had been put near an ants' nest, and the insects, being annoyed, had come out in a body to fight off the little Yankees. Chairs, table legs, as well as the boys' feet, made good roads for the attacking party; and in a moment they were swarming up trousers and sleeves, or down backs, stinging as they went, and no amount of jumping could shake them off.

It was only by rubbing the flesh hard with a towel that the ants could be dislodged; after which the boys' clothes were hung in the sun where the heat shriveled up the little pests like fire.

Fortunately the sting of this kind of ant is not harmful. The pain was soon over, and the boys began to feel hungry. Carla, going for their breakfast, found the ants foraging the conquered camp. Hundreds were busy carrying away the bread crumb by crumb, and a large ball of them formed an island in each cup of chocolate.

"Ants do not spoil anything, they are clean beasts," said Carla, as she brought in the food covered by this creeping mass. "I will soon clear them out, and the breakfast will be as good as ever."

"Certainly not, Carla! The boys must have something else."

"Oh, ma'am, ants are nothing, you will soon get used to them. But if the young masters don't want their breakfast, I will take it myself. See, there is not one left."

When Mr. Francis heard of their adventure, he asked Halde if he was pleased.

"Why should I be pleased, Father? The ants sting like nettles."

"I thought you liked curiosities that are alive and do things. Not less than seventy different kinds of ants live in British Guiana, so you can make a nice collection."

"You would have laughed had you seen us," said Loys. "Halde was just wishing for some animals to make us lively, when the ants came, and we both began to dance like mad."

"Ants are not animals," corrected Halde. "I still want animals, if you can get them, but no one could take an interest in nasty, creeping, stinging little ants."

"You are mistaken, Halde, people who have studied ants find them very interesting; but I do not wonder you have seen enough of them for the present."

Later in the day Dr. Davis, a gentleman who lived near Georgetown, called on Mr. Francis, and hear-

ing of the ants' attack, told how he had been plagued by them in the country.

"I wished to see if I could raise apples, pears, and peaches in this climate, and sent to the States for a number of small trees. When they came I planted them in boxes on the shady side of the house. Green leaves soon appeared, but in a short time they were eaten off by a swarm of ants that had a nest near by.

"As this was the best place for my plantation, I had the nest thoroughly dug up and spread under the hot sun; still the ants came. I had it heaped over with brushwood and lighted a fire which burned for several hours; still they came. I had a gutter run from the river and flooded the nest; still they came. Then I surrounded the plantation with a trench of running water which made it into an island. This was quite a labor, but ants cannot cross a stream and I felt I should be now rid of them. You can imagine my astonishment when after a few days the little creatures were as busy on my plants as before.

"I walked carefully around my island to see if any blocks of earth or any branches or leaves had made a bridge for them to cross the water; it was running clear on every side.

"As I stood thinking out this puzzle, I noticed a tree that had been included in the space surrounded by my ditch, and up and down the trunk of which

Photo by Keystone View Co.

A Country Home in the Tropics

The Roof is made of Tiles, the Best Protection against Heavy Rains

the ants seemed to be endlessly running. My eyes followed them higher and higher, until I could no longer see their little bodies, but I found how the ants had outwitted me. The spreading branches above reached over until they touched those of a tree on the other side of the water. The ants had made a highway of the two trees, mounting the one and coming down the other, an extraordinary journey when their size is considered."

"What did you do next?" asked Mr. Francis.

"The tree was cut down and dragged away, the grass has been kept carefully trimmed on both sides of the ditch so that no long stalks can lean across, and nothing is allowed to choke up the current."

"Have they not troubled you since?"

"No, but there is still plenty of grass on their side of the ditch. When famine begins, who knows but that they may remember my fruit trees and study boat building, or make a tunnel under the water?"

Mr. Francis laughed, and Halde, who had been listening, said, "I did not think ants could be so clever."

"You have scarcely made their acquaintance yet," answered the doctor, nodding his head. "Wait until the dry season begins."

CHAPTER XXI

HANNA

WHEN Dr. Davis had finished the ant story, Loys asked him if there were many wild animals in the country where he lived.

"Your father must bring you to visit me, and you may perhaps be able to catch some."

"I should like to come. Father promised to buy us animals, but he cannot find any here."

"We had a dear, lovely monkey, only he ran away," added Halde.

"You will find plenty of animals in town during the rainy season," remarked the visitor.

The boys opened their eyes as if they expected to see beasts of all kinds walking the streets as at the coming of a menagerie. After a moment's thought, Loys asked: —

"Why do they come to town when it rains?"

"They do not come, they are brought."

"Who brings them?"

"The Indians who live in the forest. The Indians can only travel during the rainy season, when the

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AN INDIAN FAMILY AT HOME

The Large Round and Oval Objects are Gourds in which they carry Water

water is high enough to float their boats over the rocky places in the rivers."

"Yes, I remember Father told us that rivers are the only roads in a wild country."

"And when the Indians cannot use these roads they must stay at home. In the dry weather they occupy themselves making hammocks, boats, ropes, earthenware, wicker baskets, and traps to catch fish, bows and arrows, and cassava meal. They also cultivate their fields, build their houses, fish, and hunt. Then, when the rivers and creeks are full of water, they start on their journey. Different tribes trade with each other as well as with the town. Some, for instance, who make good boats exchange them with those who make good hammocks, just as civilized nations do with their manufactures."

"Shall we see real Indians here in town?" asked Loys.

"Certainly."

"Do they eat children, or only grown people?" inquired Halde, anxiously.

"I have not heard of their eating any one since Robinson Crusoe's time," laughed the doctor, "so I think you are safe."

Though their father had told them nearly the same thing, the children looked forward to the arrival of Indians with some dread. Their first acquaintance with one took place in this way:—

It was a dreary day of rain. The boys had been playing in the front gallery when they heard a knock at the door. Loys ran to answer it, Halde being close behind. What a surprise for the boys! As the door opened an Indian stood facing them.

He had neither hat, shoes, nor clothes, except a bit of cloth which hung from a cotton string tied around the waist. His brown skin, the color of walnut wood, was shining wet, and from his straight, black hair, which was cut even across the forehead, the rain trickled down and lodged in drops upon his body. His eyes were small and dark, his nose somewhat flat, his mouth was large and smiling, and his chin had a pleasant dimple. A dash of red paint across each cheek and a fleck of cotton in the middle of the forehead, worn as ornaments, gave the face an odd expression. Around his throat was a necklace of pointed white teeth strung upon a cotton cord; a whistle or flute made of bone hung at the end of another cord. The right hand held two young alligators about six inches long. These had wriggled their heads through the man's fingers and winked their lower eyelids up at the boys. The left hand carried a loosely woven basket with a bird in it.

Approaching the boys, the Indian held the little alligators towards them, saying, "Cayman." Then raising the basket, he added, "Hannaquoi."

Loys understood that the man wished to sell these

things, and went to call his father. Halde, left alone with the wild man, felt inclined to run; but knowing that a boy should have courage, he stood firm, and though a little pale, was able to return the smile of the friendly savage, which made a kind of conversation between them.

Mr. Francis, who soon appeared, shook his head when the alligators were offered. The children, however, had waited so long for animals that they were willing to buy anything.

"They could be kept in a tub of water covered with wire," suggested Loys.

"The tub in a short while would be too small, unless you could teach the alligators to grow no bigger. I will take the bird."

"Hannaquoi tame, tame," said the Indian, whose quick eyes noticed that Mr. Francis looked at the basket. Then with his teeth and one hand he undid the string that fastened the top of the basket. The bird fluttered out and settled on his shoulder, at the same time making an odd cackling noise.

"The dear little thing!" exclaimed Loys. "I wonder if it will be as fond of me."

"Certainly, if you feed it every day," returned his father. "How much for the bird?"

"Three shilling," said the Indian, holding up three fingers.

"Could we not keep the Indian, like Friday? He looks so good," whispered Halde.

"I am afraid he would be worse than alligators as a pet. Perhaps he will let us have his necklace and flute."

The Indian consented to part with his ornaments. When asked the price, he held up one open hand and attempted to add a finger from the other. This, the lively alligators prevented. He thought a moment, then closed the open hand and raised one finger alone, thus indicating that six shillings must be given.

The bargain concluded, the Indian tried to untie the ornaments from around his neck, but the alligators again interfered and he offered them to Loys to hold.

It was now Loys' turn to be brave; he stretched out his hand for the wicked-looking creatures, when Mr. Francis settled the difficulty by untying the knots himself.

As the flute was loosened it fell on the floor. Placing his foot upon it, the man grasped it with his toes and bent his leg upward. When the flute came on a level with his hand, he took it and gave it to Mr. Francis. The boys were astonished at this unusual way of employing a foot.

"This skilful habit of grasping with the toes seems to be common to all barefooted people," remarked their father. "I have seen coolies do the same

thing, but never a negro. It may be that the blacks have forgotten the custom since living among a shoe-wearing nation."

The bargain being concluded, the Indian trotted off. Loys and Halde watched him as he disappeared down the street, still happy and smiling, as if he and the weather were friends of too long standing ever to quarrel.

The new curiosities were added to the others already in the gallery. The teeth of the necklace were those of the peccary, a wild hog found in the forests of Guiana. There were two hundred teeth in all; each about an inch long and neatly pierced with a hole by which to fasten it to the cord. The flute was made from the thigh bone of a jaguar. It had three holes besides the one used for blowing into, and produced a shrill sound not at all musical.

Hannaquoi, or Hanna as the children called her, became a great pet. She was a reddish brown bird of the pheasant family and the size of an ordinary hen. Early in the morning she would hop upstairs and cackle for the door to be opened. Then followed a game of hide-and-seek; Hanna running under bureaus, stands, and chairs, with the boys after her. She had an odd way of holding her head down when she ran, as if going through the thick underbrush of the woods.

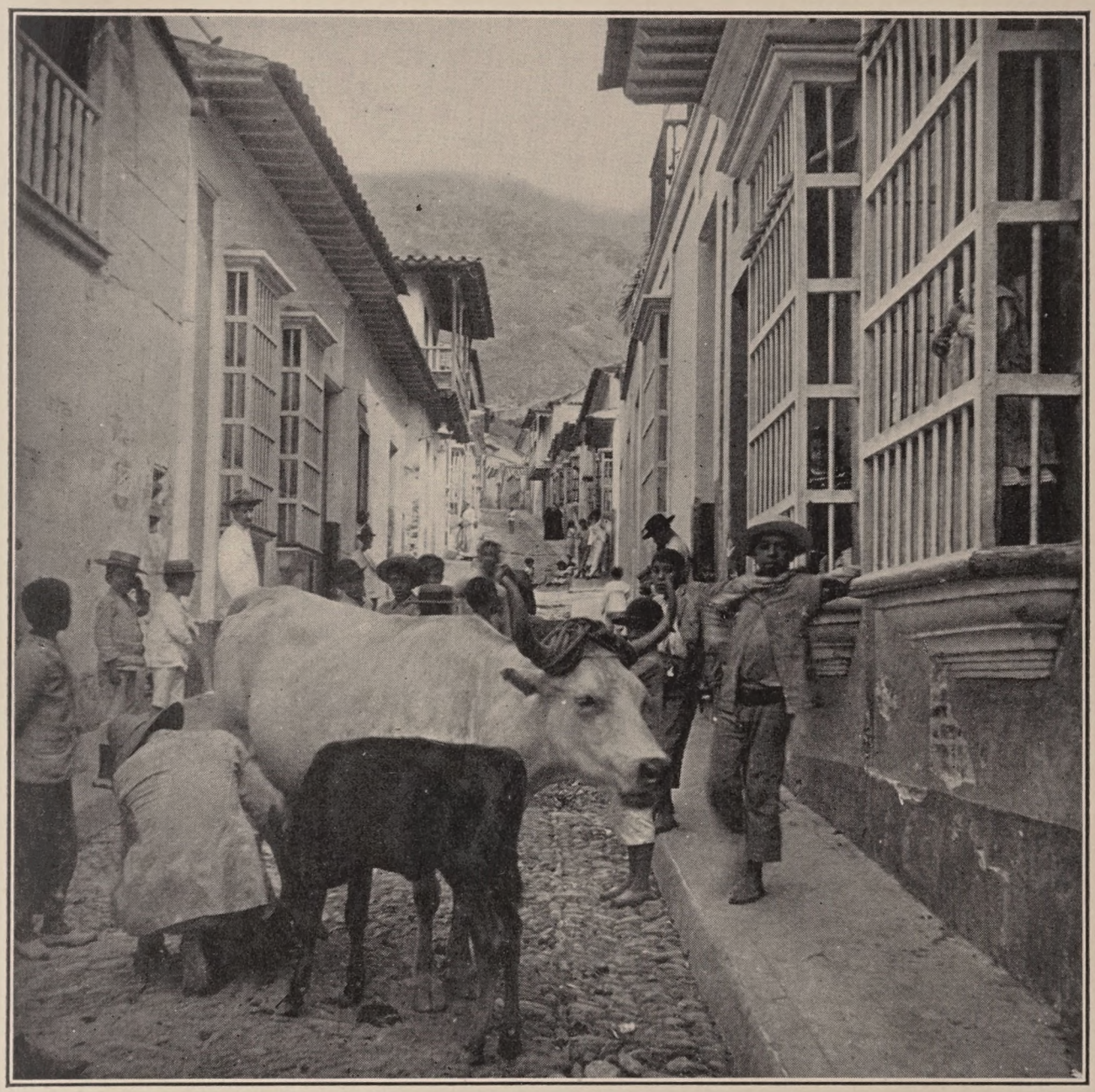
She was seldom out of doors and her favorite roost-

ing place seemed to be the sideboard in the dining room, where she used the square handle of a tea-pot as a perch. Being fonder of running than flying, it was safe to play with Hanna anywhere in the house. But one day, alas! when hard pressed, she jumped upon the shelf where the monkey had done so much damage, and again the dinner ware suffered.

Mrs. Francis decided that Hanna must be kept in the garden; only the bird had not learned obedience in her wild home, and as the windows were constantly open she was no sooner put out of one than she came in at another.

Mrs. Francis then had the bird penned in the hen-coop. But with her quick way of slipping through small openings Hanna would steal past the cook when she fed the chickens, and running into the house, would cackle loudly for the boys.

This trick being guarded against, Hanna's sharp eyes found holes at the bottom of the coop big enough to squeeze through. Not a day passed that she did not escape, first in one place, and after it was closed, making or finding another; her joyful cackle announcing the fact to the boys as soon as she was free. The children were delighted with her skill, but their mother, fearing that something valuable would be destroyed, gave orders for a board to be put entirely around the lower part of the hen-coop.



A Visit from the Milkman

The Cows are driven along the Narrow Streets and milked at the Customer's Door

For some time Hanna remained safely in prison, no doubt planning a way out. One morning her joyful clack, clack, clack, was again heard in the gallery. With the help of her claws and her stiff tail she had climbed to the top of the coop, where a broken lath opened the way to liberty.

The boys began a chase after her, up and down, in and out; but Hanna, knowing the coop would be her doom, was not to be caught. Presently crash! and one of the most beautiful vases in the drawing-room lay in pieces. The children were thoroughly frightened, and when they next thought of Hanna she had disappeared. All the servants were sent in search of her without success.

"It will be the monkey story over again," sighed Mrs. Francis.

At every ring of the door-bell the family expected to hear some complaint against the bird. However, Hanna was not wicked, and though they found afterwards that she had wandered into several of the neighboring houses, her visits were peaceful.

The following morning, before the family had taken their breakfast, Hanna was heard in the garden cheerfully cackling for admittance.

"Which would you rather, boys," asked Mr. Francis, with determination; "shall we kill the bird or give her away?"

"It would be very cruel to kill her. Hanna did

not know the vase would break," said Loys, defending his pet.

"She is not accustomed to such things in the woods," added Halde. "Please excuse her this time, and we will be careful, careful, careful, that she does not do it again."

"If I wait until she becomes accustomed, as you call it, nothing will be safe."

Just then Carla came in with the breakfast, Hanna cackling behind, happy to see her little masters after a day spent from home and having no doubt of being well received. The children were just as pleased to see her.

Mr. Francis could not help laughing, and said, "I really do not know what to do, she is an amusing little pest."

"Sir, if you tie her by the leg to a stake in the garden she cannot get loose, and the young gentlemen will still be able to play with her," advised the woman.

"Try it, Carla, though I believe she is too clever to remain tied long."

Mr. Francis was right. Every now and then Hanna would break the cord or pick the knot open with her bill, and once free she would hurry off to the house. Finally she had to be imprisoned in one of the wire cages in the garden. Here the children often went to see her, and sometimes took her out for a little exercise.

One thing more must be told of Hanna; she was particularly fond of jessamine flowers. A vine ran over the wire netting of her prison, and she spent many a happy hour eating the snowy blossoms, which, perhaps on account of their honey, she preferred to any other food.

CHAPTER XXII

FATHER'S PET

WHAT would you think of a puma for a pet! The puma lives in the forests of South America and is sometimes called the American lion, on account of its size. In British Guiana pumas often come to the clearings made by woodcutters, to the Indian villages, and even as far as the plantations, where they feast on sugar-cane or steal cattle.

One day an Indian shot a mother puma five feet long, the tail making two feet more. The mother had a cub with her no larger than a kitten, and when the Indian brought the puma's skin to town for sale his wife carried the cub, which she fed at her breast like a baby.

Mr. Francis met the Indians in the street and bought both the skin and the cub. Loys and Halde were delighted when they saw the little animal. As it could not yet eat, a feeding-bottle was procured for it. The mother's skin was put over a steamer chair in the gallery, which made a comfortable bed,

and there the cub loved to lie with a paw on each side of the bottle, sucking away most happily.

When bought, his eyes were still closed, like those of a kitten, but later they opened and were of a clear brown color that turned golden in the sunlight. His skin was of a reddish brown, spotted in a slightly darker tint; these spots, however, disappeared as he grew up. His paws and head seemed too big for him, showing that in time he would become a large animal; meanwhile they looked as if borrowed from an older brother and made the cub very awkward.

Mr. Francis called him Joe. He soon knew his name and began to be playful. By and by the milk bottle was given up in favor of cooked meat, and the chair in the gallery exchanged for a box in the garden. As Joe grew rapidly, Mr. Francis also bought a collar and chain so that his pet could be fastened when necessary.

A number of birds had been added to the collection during this time and were kept in the garden. The first day Joe appeared there was a great row among them. All that could do so ran hiding under the bushes, while those in the cages screamed and beat their wings against the wire netting. Joe's soft eyes glistened, and he looked anything but gentle as, tugging at the chain, he crouched for a spring.

Joe and his box were taken to the other side of the house out of temptation, and a few loads of sand were

spread for him to roll upon. Here he spent a pleasant life, amusing himself in many ways. One game he never tired of was to lie on his back after meals, and tossing up the dinner pan with his big paws, catch it again as a circus man does a ball.

The puma was particular about his food. A neighbor having cooked a tough goose that could not be eaten sent it to Joe with his compliments. After the first bite the animal growled, turned it around with his paw and sniffed at it; then crouching at some distance, he glared sideways towards the goose, as if the very sight of it offended him.

Suddenly Joe had a happy thought; dinner was impossible, but not revenge. Springing forward, he knocked the goose here and there, caught and flung it, rolled over it, and bruised, bit, and tore it to shreds — without, however, eating a morsel. The story became known about town, and the neighbor was greatly teased about his goose that was even too tough for a puma to eat.

Joe was fond of Mr. Francis, and whenever he heard his master's step crunching the shells he lay in wait, hiding behind his box. Any person would have thought he meant mischief; but though he pounced on Mr. Francis, it was only for a game of romps. Rising on his hind legs and putting his great paws on his master's shoulders, Joe licked Mr. Francis' face and hands, joyfully purring the while.

Then, his chain being unfastened, a wrestling match began, in which man and beast, clasped in friendly embrace, tried to throw each other. Sometimes four legs went down, sometimes two legs; then both rolled on the soft sand, the beast now uppermost, again the man, panting and struggling until worn out.

Joe's claws grew sharp and long, but he folded them into his paws during playtime and took care not to scratch Mr. Francis. He became very obedient and followed at his master's heels through the crowded streets or public gardens without a leash of any kind. A fowl in the way was still tempting, but if he started after it one word from Mr. Francis brought him back.

By and by Mr. Francis took him every morning to his place of business, where Joe lay under the office table all day. The moment Mr. Francis put on his hat to leave, the puma would stretch himself and rise to follow. Loys called him "Father's pet," for the two were seldom apart.

Finally, Joe reached such a size that the people objected to his going about the town in this way. Mrs. Francis shared their fears and forbade the children to play with him. It was difficult to believe that the big animal would not sooner or later show his native fierceness and injure some one.

Mr. Francis never lost confidence in his pet, but to satisfy the timid he chained Joe in the garden

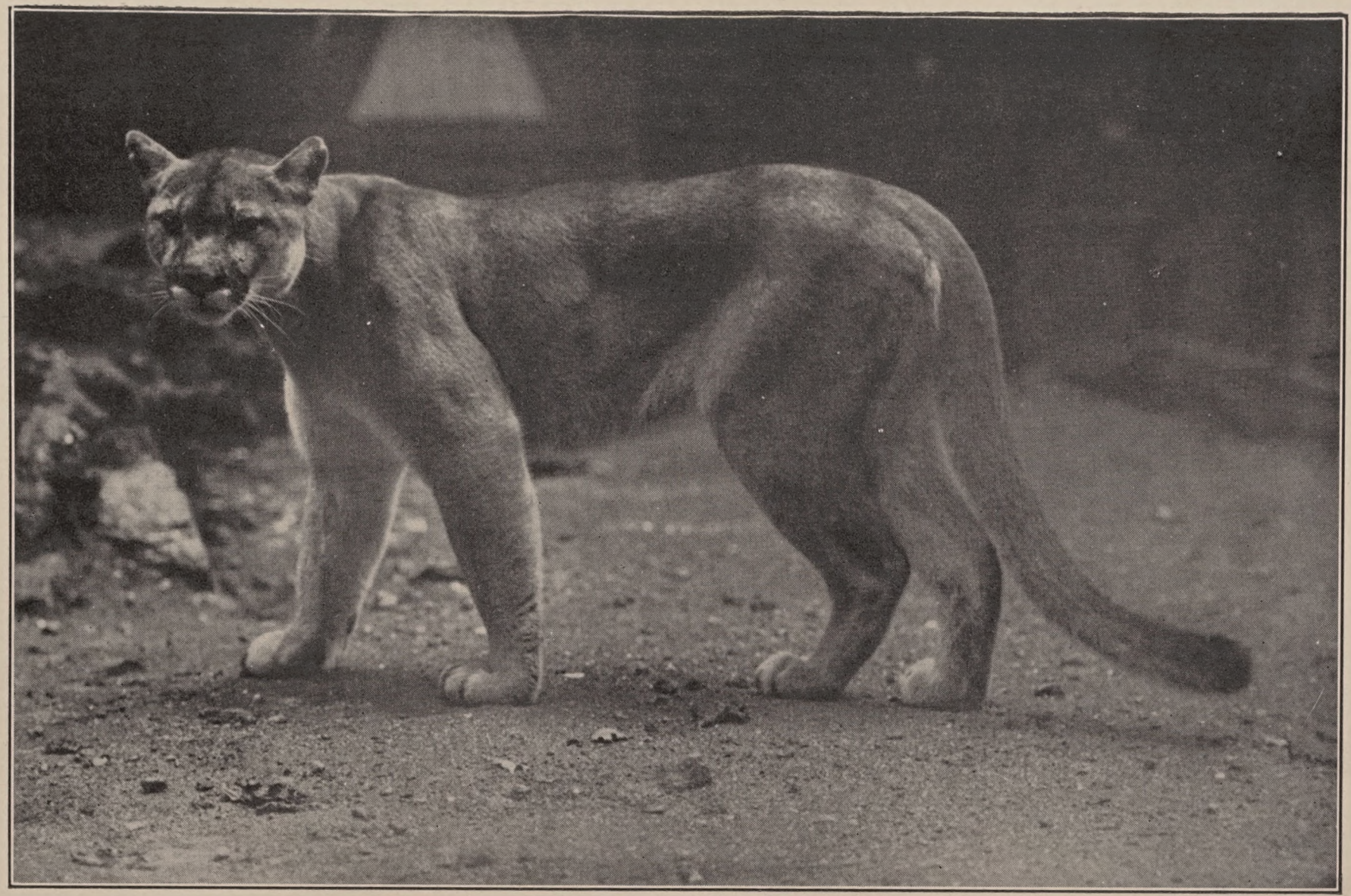
each day when leaving home; on returning, however, his first care was to loosen him. Then the two would have their game of romps and afterwards go upstairs, where Joe's favorite place was still the chair with his mother's skin upon it, which had been his bed when a baby.

Time proved the faultfinders to be wrong; the puma hurt no one, and, unlike some humans, he never forgot a kindness. One day he climbed a tree near his box, and on getting down, caught his rope over a limb, where he remained hanging in midair without power to help himself. Mr. and Mrs. Francis were away from home, and the poor beast, blind with pain, struggling, choking, foaming at the mouth, and pawing the air in his efforts to get free, was an ugly-looking thing to approach.

Cook and the housemaid cried, "Ei, ei, he punish too bad!" but did not venture near.

Fortunately the noise brought the seamstress to the garden, and knowing how much Joe's loss would be felt, she tried to help him. Taking a sharp knife, she mounted a bench under the tree, only to find that the rope was still beyond her reach. She then persuaded the yelling cook to bring two empty barrels and aid her to put the bench upon them. From this height she at last succeeded in sawing through the rope.

All this time the strangling animal became weaker



Father's Pet — Joe, the Puma

and weaker, and when he dropped to the ground not a sign of life remained. The good girl threw water over him and rubbed him until he shivered and opened his eyes. Then she wrapped his cold body in a blanket and held him in her lap until he became warm. Next day Joe was as lively as ever.

The family were very grateful to the seamstress, but not more so than Joe. He would lick her hand and rub himself against her side when she came near, and whine and cry after her when she left. The girl often sat in the door of his box with one arm around his great neck, teasing and petting him, pulling his ears and blindfolding his eyes, while he lay contentedly purring. Once, when a troublesome bone got between his teeth, she risked her hand in his mouth to take it out; nothing offended him, from her.

Mrs. Francis was also a favorite. Noticing a wound on his back that was tormenting him, she bathed the sore and dressed it with a salve. Weeks went by: it had long been well, but Joe always turned to show the spot whenever he saw her — a proof that he remembered what she had done.

Few people came to the house without wishing to see such a well-behaved puma. Once this led to an embarrassing situation. An officer from the garrison and his wife were calling. At their request Mr. Francis went to fetch the puma. Joe no sooner

felt himself free than, without waiting for his chain to be taken off, he went bounding upstairs ahead of his master.

The great beast rushed into the gallery clanking his chain and leaped into his favorite chair. Unfortunately the officer, not knowing that this chair was reserved for Joe, was seated in it at the time, and received the flying puma in his lap.

The lady screamed and grew faint, while Joe, curled comfortably on the man's knees, looked from the one to the other as if wondering what all the fuss was about.

Mr. Francis soon appeared, made Joe get down, and explained that the animal meant no harm; however, the visitors did not remain long and never again asked to see the puma.

Joe's character for gentleness suffered through this little mistake. The officer, as was natural, said that no more terrible or bloodthirsty animal could be found. But this also had its good side: no vagabond ever came into the garden without shouting first, peddlers only did business outside the gate, the ripest fruit might lie under the trees without children being tempted to enter, and at night one growl from the puma made the hardiest chicken-thief take to his heels — not a house in Georgetown was better protected, and Joe, as a watch-dog, deserved all praise.

CHAPTER XXIII

OTHER PETS

MEANWHILE plenty of new pets had been found for sale in the market and in the streets. A beautiful yellow and black troupial had its cage in the gallery. The cage door was never closed, and though the little bird constantly flew in and out of the house, it always returned. It had a pleasant song, and became so tame that it would hop on the dinner-table and eat the food from your plate, ready to quarrel and peck your fingers if you tried to interfere.

Two tall birds, called trumpeters from the singular noise they make, stalked about the garden. They were as large as a turkey, but more slender and with long legs that enabled them to run swiftly. Their breast feathers were a changing blue and purple, their head, neck, and stomach a glossy black, and their wings and back were black. On seeing any one in the garden they would walk backwards before them, holding out their wings, bowing their heads, and making their queer throat noise of

"brum, brum, brum," as if to attract attention and admiration.

An ibis, called in the colony a curri-curri, formed a brilliant spot of color in the garden. It was scarlet even to its legs and feet, the tips of the wing feathers and the curved beak alone being jet-black. Another wader from the marshes of the interior, called a spoonbill, on account of its oddly flattened bill, picked worms from the gutters or wandered as far as the pond in the middle of the road, returning every evening to sleep.

A large, stupid bird, black, with a yellow bill, known by the name of powise, also strolled about the place. But perhaps the funniest bird of all was a toucan. Its bill, three inches wide and six inches long, at least a third longer than the whole body, was colored red, black, blue, and yellow, the same tints as the feathers.

Though so awkward looking, the toucan could catch anything thrown him as skillfully as would a dog. Billy, as the boys called him, soon knew the cook and would hop — he could not run or walk — to the kitchen every morning for his breakfast of raw plantain and a deep dish of milk or tea. If the door was shut, he rapped with his beak until cook opened it for him. Billy drank as other birds do, by sipping the liquid and holding back his head, and never looked more comical than when he held up

The Ibis

his great beak to let the draught flow down his throat. His tongue was quite thin and looked like a feather.

Once, seeing Carla carrying the breakfast upstairs, Billy hopped himself and his big bill from step to step after her, until he came to the boys' door, where he knocked. Such joy as there was when they saw their visitor! They set a chair with a box upon it near the table and gave him bread and milk. But what was less polite, they laughed at their guest until Halde choked. Their parents came in to see what was the matter, and the breakfast party appeared so odd that they too joined the laugh. Fortunately Billy did not mind, but looked as pleased as his round eyes would allow.

"This is all very well for once," Mr. Francis warned, "but if the toucan gets in the habit of coming we shall have the same trouble as with Hanna."

"Isn't it a pity we do not live in the woods, where we could have all our pets around us?" remarked Halde.

"You forget the ants," returned Loys, laughing.

"It takes two or three years for the toucan's gaudy bill to become fully colored," explained Mr. Francis. "The color is contained in a thin skin upon the inner surface of the bill, which being transparent allows the tints to show through. These brilliant hues fade soon after death, and the bill of stuffed specimens becomes dull, if not painted inside.

"The curri-curri, too, has long to wait for its crimson coat. When first hatched, its feathers are a dark gray; after which they grow perfectly white, and finally red. But now take the toucan down and enjoy yourselves in the garden while the morning is cool."

Besides the larger birds a number of small ones filled the wire cages: woodpeckers, redbreasts, and blackbirds, parrakeets always chattering and eating, orange cocks-of-the-rock with tufts of feathers on their heads like a soldier's cap, and a number of sackis, blue and black, or white and black — at one time Loys counted thirty-nine birds. James now had what he called a "business," as Mr. Francis employed him to keep the cages clean. He was very proud to earn regular wages.

The early dawn had other sounds added to those the children first heard in their new home. They could easily believe themselves in the wild forest when listening to the different shrill cries which arose from the garden. No one was able to sleep after five o'clock, but as the morning hours are the most pleasant part of the day in Guiana, this could not be called a disadvantage.

What seems most singular, and proves most attractive about the birds and animals of the tropics, is their great gentleness. They appear to be fond of human society, and like the horse and dog they know their master and love him.

Though the children liked the birds, Joe was still their prime favorite, which gave Mrs. Francis many an anxious moment. Loys, especially, thought himself man enough to manage half a dozen pumas. At last this trouble was settled. Mr. Francis came home one day with a young ocelot he had bought for Loys alone. Its coat was of a light yellow color, striped and spotted with dark brown. These animals are easily tamed, and when full-grown are from two to three feet long.

Loys was greatly pleased with his pet, his first care being to name the pretty thing. But no name satisfied him, and each day he tried another; so that the poor ocelot never knew what it was called. He fed his pet regularly and tried to teach it to follow him about. The little beast was quite willing to eat, but evidently could not see the use of trotting up and down the garden afterwards. Loys coaxed, snapped his finger and thumb, and made all the wheedling noises he had ever heard — all to no effect.

"I think if you let him alone he would like you better," advised his mother.

But Loys could not wait; the ocelot must obey. He tied a cord around its neck and began to pull, at first gently, then with all his might; while the ocelot held back, trying to sink his claws into the shells that covered the walk.

The people who had predicted evil of Joe now said

that the ocelot was a dangerous plaything for a boy. It was the other way about; the ocelot never hurt Loys, but the boy showed such eagerness in training his pet that it finally died of being too much educated.

Loys was much grieved at this loss, and with a sad heart buried the little ocelot under the palm tree in the garden.

At the same time that Mr. Francis gave Loys the ocelot, he bought Halde the long-promised sakawinki. It had yellow hair and brown eyes. The tail was not prehensile, and only served for balancing when the monkey sprang from bush to bush.

Halde did not search far for a name. He called his pet Winkie, because it winked its eyes incessantly. Winkie was very harmless and amusing, and soon became attached to his young master.

In the morning if Winkie could get into the boys' room, he would jump on the bed and carefully open Halde's eyelids with his little fingers. Once he saw Mrs. Francis putting powder on her face, and ever afterwards, when Winkie had a chance, he did the same.

He was very fond of music, and though his usual time for going to sleep was at sunset, he would remain awake half the night if any one sang or played on the piano. Winkie had the ear of a true musician, and took such a dislike to a certain Scotch reel that if

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INDIAN MARKET WOMEN

even a few bars of it were played, he ran screaming away; and no matter how this piece might be brought in among others, the little scamp never failed to recognize it.

Mr. Francis had a box fastened above the door in the gallery for Winkie to live in. Here the monkey was tied with a long cord most of the time. His favorite amusement was teasing the puma. Whenever Joe walked through the door, the monkey would slip down the rope and seize him by the tail. This was a dangerous pastime, for Joe saw no fun in it and whirled around and around trying to catch his tormentor. However, Winkie had no fear, and held on as long as it suited him; then, up he would climb hand over hand to his house, leaving the puma growling below.

One day he played a funny trick. A woman came in carrying a tray of tarts on her head and stood under his box talking to Carla. Here was a feast for Master Winkie. He made several trips up and down his rope loaded with tarts, and greedily taking more than he could hold, dropped and spoiled many of them on the way. The woman was too busy with her gossip to notice the monkey; but the tarts falling faster and faster at last drew her attention from her interesting tale. How she screamed and raged when she saw what had happened! Winkie kept well out of reach or he would have fared badly.

Halde was much frightened at the storm his pet had raised, and ran for his mother, who paid the woman for her loss.

Winkie was always ready to eat, and care had to be taken not to leave him untied when the table was laid. If he got to the sugar bowl, not content with a few lumps, he would tuck piece after piece under his arms, each falling as he stowed away the next, until none remained in the bowl; then, with a lump in his mouth and one in each hand, he would scamper off, leaving the rest lying on the table.

Once he put his hand into a wide-mouthed jar of cayenne peppers, thinking he had found a great treat. Such a howl as went up when he licked his fingers! Poor Winkie did not forget the peppers for a long time.

Winkie had a good memory, but little judgment. One day he found a spider in a hole at the top of one of the columns of the gallery; and ever afterwards, when he was free, he would return to the place and stick his hand in the hole, hoping to get another dainty morsel.

Scarcely a day passed that the monkey did not learn something new. When Halde went for a walk he sometimes bought nuts which he put in his various pockets, and no matter how carefully they were hidden, his pet would be sure to find them all.

Winkie finally lost all the fur of his body — due,

the cook insisted, from his having eaten salted food. No funnier creature could be imagined than this hairless monkey. He reminded you of those weazened little old gnomes that you read about in fairy tales. The poor fellow naturally felt chilly in this condition, and his favorite haunt was a basket under the kitchen stove filled with feathers that cook kept for stuffing pillows. Here he would remain hours at a time, his thin white face and tiny nose alone peeping out of his warm bed.

Winkie, alas! met with a sad end. One day, when the family were out, he crept through the lattice of the gallery and got his rope so tangled among the vines that he could not return. The heat was very great, and the little monkey, accustomed to the shade of the forest, became ill. He died soon afterwards and was buried in the garden beside the ocelot.

CHAPTER XXIV

MONKEYS AGAIN

FIVE different kinds of monkeys now occupied a part of the large cages in the garden, but it was decided that no more should be brought into the house.

One of these, of a reddish brown color, had a heavy black beard, and wore his hair nicely parted in the middle. He must have been a king in Monkey-land, for he wished to rule all the others, and by biting and squeezing them in his long hairy arms he frightened them into submission. The old fellow was despotic and selfish, and when the cook came with food, he took a place by the door and would let nothing pass. After filling his four hands and mouth he sat upon all he could not hold, and when his subjects tried to get a bite he chased them away. However, the tyrant was punished for his greediness. Defending his hoard gave him little chance to eat, so that the hungry crowd carried it off piece by piece.

In the next cage, separated only by a wire netting, were the small birds. One of these foolishly put its

head through the netting; seeing which, the bloodthirsty King snapped it off.

When the cook found out what had happened, she pointed her finger at him and said in a threatening tone, "You scamp, you killed that bird!"

Holding one hand in the other before him, the old rogue actually shook his head, at the same time making the most piteous noise as if grieved that such a serious suspicion should fall upon him.

Of course the family had to be called to see these new antics, which King Monkey repeated as often as cook held up her finger to scold.

A fierce baboon lived under the cage. He came from Africa and had been bought by Mr. Francis from the captain of an East-Indiaman. He was a yard high and had a little stub of a tail. His fur was the color of brown paper; his eyes a bright yellow. A stout rope kept him from wandering far, but he found plenty of mischief to do in his limited surroundings. Whenever another animal came near enough he would catch it by the hind quarters and pull it backwards in a circle. At other times he took great pleasure in picking fleas from his victims' long hair and in eating them.

A fat young fox that had a box not far off sometimes strayed into the danger zone. Halde called it the "baboon's pet," for the monkey seemed to be fond of the little animal and liked to hold it

in his arms. Whether he held the struggling fox head up or down mattered little to the affectionate baboon.

One day the baboon got loose, and creeping softly to the top of the monkey-house, tore away the shingles with his strong teeth and hands, until he had made a hole in the roof. Then, stretching his arm through the opening, he helped the monkeys out. Of course the King came first, with his subjects following after, and in a moment they had scattered on all sides. Many days passed before they could be coaxed back to their cage, when a singular thing was noticed: five monkeys had escaped, but after five were caught one still remained at large. Who could explain the mystery!

The "other monkey," as the boys called him, kept in the highest trees. In vain traps with the best of food were set. In vain monkey punch, made of rum, molasses, and water, was put in his way. He ate, but only when sure that no one was near; he drank, but never enough to make a *beast* of himself by getting drunk. James, nimble as a cat, spent morning after morning scrambling from limb to limb in the hope of surprising him. But it was James and the children who got the surprise, when the "other monkey" was finally recognized to be none other than the long-lost Sapajou.

What joy, what shouting and jumping took place!

How Sapajou hung upside down by his tail and drew his face into frightful grimaces! How the boys coaxed, chased, and called him! It was to no purpose; "dear Sapajou" had been too long at liberty and knew the tricks of the town by heart. He was quite willing to take punch and breakfast at a safe distance or to do gymnastics on the tree-tops; but although he had evidently been attracted by the escaped monkeys when they were wandering about, he did not in the least wish to share their cage.

Then James had an idea: "You no feed dat monkey. He get too hungry, he come down fast enough."

This plan was tried, but Sapajou soon showed that he could live by his wits, as indeed he must have been doing during his long absence. He feasted on mangoes, sappadillas, and guavas, and made raids through the windows of the houses in the neighborhood. No breakfast or dinner table was safe, and if by chance a pantry door was left open, the bread, butter, and sugar disappeared.

Sapajou's street life had made him such a skillful thief that nothing escaped him. He stole a thimble and a fan belonging to Mrs. Francis, he took the soap from the washstand, and was seen picking a flower from a bouquet in the drawing-room and smelling it. One day he put his hand in the jar of peppers, as little Winkie had done, and was so angry when he tasted the peppers that in his rage

he dragged the cloth from the table and broke a quantity of dishes.

But the prettiest sight was to watch Sapajou among the trees. It needed no coaxing to get him on the cocoanut tree now, for he felt more safe there than in any other place. He ran up the rough bark like a lizard, and when he wished to come down he crept to the end of one of the long, swinging leaf-branches, where, balancing himself a few moments, he chose a place to alight. This done, he dropped boldly through the air, some fifteen or twenty feet onto the bushy crown of a lower tree, without hurt or exertion.

When climbing trees that had limbs, he did not go directly up, but advanced in a series of leaps from side to side, loosing all hands at once, and jumping so lightly that he looked like a ball bouncing to and fro.

No doubt this was a pleasant life for Sapajou, but one that could not last. Each day the people became more provoked at the daring raids of the thief, until finally some one shot him. True to his love of freedom even in death, Sapajou wrapped his tail tightly around the cocoanut branch on which he had taken refuge and refused to fall.

The children were much grieved over the sad end of their first pet, and as they could not bear to see his poor body swinging in the wind, James had to clamber after it.

Sapajou was laid by the side of the ocelot and little Winkie, and many tears were shed over their graves. But joy sometimes comes out of sorrow: a kind gentleman having heard of the boys' losses gave them a frisky little Skye terrier, and they soon found, what indeed had been discovered long before, that of all animals the dog is the best friend of man.

CHAPTER XXV

MOTHER'S PETS

OF all the animals in the collection the queerest looking was an ant-eater. His thick body measured two feet in height and three feet in length, and was covered with shaggy ash-colored hair. The shoulders were marked with a broad jet-black patch that extended under the neck and ended in a point halfway down the sides. The tail, of a grizzly gray, formed a flat mass of stiff, long hair, and was about the length of the body. When sleeping, the creature turns this bushy tail back over his body, thus hiding himself completely from his enemies.

The ant-eater is such an odd beast that he can be compared to no other animal in particular. A short, stiff mane like that of the zebra rises on his back, his head and small ears resemble those of a giraffe, while his long, narrow snout gives him somewhat the appearance of a bird. His fore feet are powerful and armed with strong claws that he folds under his paws when in motion, so that he actually walks

Mother's Pet — the Anteater

on his knuckles. He uses his hind feet in the ordinary manner, by walking on their soles.

The ant-eater takes no food that needs chewing, as he is without teeth, and his mouth is so small that he can only eat ants and their larvæ. But if a doctor were to ask him to show his tongue, he could put half a yard of it on view. However, what it has gained in length it loses in width, for it is no thicker than a lead-pencil. At the back of the mouth are two glands which give out a sticky liquid that wets the tongue.

This sticky, snake-like tongue and his strong front paws are the animal's means of getting a living. With his paws he tears the bark from old trees and digs open the ants' nests that are underground or built with mud on the surface; while the long tongue darts in and out with a rapidity of once or twice a second, drawing hundreds, or rather thousands, of insects into his mouth at every meal.

It is said that, when attacked, the ant-eater receives his foes lying upon his back, and if one comes within reach he squeezes him to death with his powerful fore paws. Indians consider him fierce and keep at a distance, letting their arrows act for them. But he protects himself chiefly by remaining unseen. In the dark woods his color and the habit he has of covering himself with his tail when asleep allows him generally to live a quiet life. Ants are plentiful,

and having chosen these insects for his diet, he is not troubled by other animals wishing to dine with him. His flesh is considered good, and the Indian hunter is his most dangerous enemy.

Whether savage or timid in his native forest, the ant-eater owned by Mr. Francis was very tame. At first the boys were not permitted to go near the stable in which he was kept. James, too, stayed well beyond reach of his claws when feeding him. But as day after day passed and the beast never showed temper, James became braver, and finally led him to the grass-plot for an airing, carefully walking backward the while, in case the ant-eater might take an idea to make a charge. The animal, however, did not seem to have ideas, or perhaps they came to him very slowly. He attacked no one, did as he was told, and spent his short life looking ugly and stupid.

Mrs. Francis pitied the unhappy brute, and set her wits to find something for him to eat. To collect sufficient ants, even for a single meal, would be like those tasks given to unfortunate princes by the wicked fairies of old. Mrs. Francis did not attempt this, but had some raw meat chopped fine to resemble ants. The meat was then spread upon a board, and a portion of it mixed with water and molasses, as most animals like sweets. Milk was also given him, but he was never seen to eat, and looked more miserable every day.

Mrs. Francis still hoped that in time he would get accustomed to his new surroundings and thrive. The boys called him "Mother's pet." She had taught him to give her his great paw, and paid more attention to him than to any of the other animals; but in spite of her care he died at the end of three weeks.

The ant-eater was not buried. As these creatures are rare, even in the tropics, Mr. Francis had the skin stuffed and mounted. It was then noticed that the animal had a wound upon his side, received when he was captured while swimming across a river. His reputation for fierceness had no doubt been the cause of the blow.

There is an idea held by many that all wild animals are savage. This is far from being true. People who have to do with them should be cautious, but not cruel. If taken young, kindly treated, and well fed, there are few animals that cannot be tamed, and that do not know and become fond of their masters.

A strange thing about Mother's pet was that he had no voice. During the three weeks of his captivity he never uttered a sound. A man in pain groans, children cry, cattle bellow, dogs whine; each animal has some way of speaking to its fellows. But the ant-eater, however he suffers, can make no complaint; he might be called the silent animal.

Mother's next choice of a pet was not more lucky; in fact, she could scarcely be said to choose her pets; she adopted them through pity. One morning, when the children and their father were out walking, a man stopped at the gate, carrying over his shoulder a stick from which hung a sloth head downwards. Struck by its doleful state, Mrs. Francis bought it, and when the family returned, she showed them her purchase lying motionless in the grass under a tree.

"It looks like a door-mat," said Halde.

"I wonder if we can teach it to do anything," remarked Loys, examining the beast from all sides.

"Well, Mother, as you never cared enough for an animal to buy one, this seems an odd beginning." It was Mr. Francis who spoke.

"I did not care for the thing, only a man was carrying it so cruelly, hanging to a stick by its claws, that I could not bear to let it suffer. I am afraid there is something the matter; it does not seem able to walk."

Mr. Francis burst out laughing. "My dear wife, it is you who are cruel. A sloth is not intended to walk on its feet."

"Why, then, has it feet?"

"To hang on by. In a country of forests, like British Guiana, many animals have been fitted for spending their lives in the trees. With most of

these the tail is very important and is prehensile. Boys, have you forgotten what prehensile means?"

"Like a hand, to hold with," answered Loys.

"Like Sapajou," shouted Halde.

"Good! Not only monkeys have prehensile tails, but other climbers as well: the tree porcupine, the smaller variety of ant-eater, and a beast, very numerous here, called the yawarri. Snakes may be said to be one long tail that is prehensile, and snakes are great climbers."

"But this door-mat animal has no tail at all," objected Loys, pushing the sloth with his foot.

"It holds on with its paws, which serve for no other purpose than to seize the branches from which it hangs, sleeping or waking, eating, traveling, or resting. It can be said to be the only animal that goes through life upside down." Mr. Francis thereupon took a stick, and waiting until the sloth caught a firm hold, lifted it into the mango tree, where it slowly transferred itself to a branch.

The sloth is a shapeless, repulsive beast, about the size of a cat, and covered with a coat of coarse grizzled hair spotted with dull black and white marks. It has a small head and a flat, pug-like face, black, smooth, and edged with whitish hair. Its eyes are round and set wide apart, and its mouth is large and seems forever grinning, yet gives an impression of distress that had won Mrs. Francis' sympathy. At

the end of each paw are three long claws, curved so as to fit closely around a limb.

Finally, getting settled, with his claws clasped above him and his head hidden between his fore legs, the sloth looked as if he intended to remain in that position as long as the tree lasted.

"Do you think it hurts him to hang like that?" asked Mrs. Francis, pityingly.

"Does it hurt a fly to remain on the ceiling?"

"The fly can go away when it is tired, but the poor sloth seems unable to make itself comfortable in any way. I cannot bear to look at it, it seems so miserable."

"Suppose we kill and eat it?"

"Disgusting!" exclaimed the boys.

"Not at all; the sloth is a clean animal. Its flesh, I am told, tastes like mutton, and is highly prized by the Indians. When they have killed one, they dip it in water and hold it before a fire to remove its pelt, after which they boil the animal. However, sloths are hard to capture; even death does not loosen their grip on the limb, and it is only by cutting down the tree or by climbing up to them that they can be dislodged."

"I wish I had not bought it," sighed Mrs. Francis. "Do you know what they eat?"

"Their food is green leaves, so your pet can easily feed himself."

(After Vogt and Specht)

ANOTHER OF MOTHER'S PETS — THE SLOTH

In spite of this promise, the sloth never attempted anything of the kind, but hung in the same place, with its unchanging smile, until the sight was enough to give you bad dreams.

The boys tempted it with leaves, Mr. Francis the while gently using his cane as a dinner-bell to rouse its attention. The sloth, however, would not eat. Mrs. Francis then had a happy thought: that grinning mouth seemed just fitted to receive milk. Nothing was easier than to pour the liquid into it, but the beast would not swallow.

Next she got the feeding bottle that Joe had used when young. Alas! for reasons only known to itself, the sloth pretended it could not suck, though it must have done so when a baby. Whatever the cause of this stubbornness, the sloth stuck to its point as well as to the tree, until death rendered further sticking unnecessary.

"Surely they must move about and eat in the woods, even if they are upside down," observed Mrs. Francis, much puzzled.

"Of course they do," answered her husband. "It has been said they can travel quite fast, though I have never seen them move at any other than a snail's pace. My opinion is that when an animal cannot think quickly it does nothing quickly. That is, stupid animals are torpid, and intelligent ones lively, both in mind and body."

"Let us ask some one if there is any special leaf they feed on. Not that I ever want to own another sloth; still, it would be a satisfaction to know if we could have prevented the death of ours."

"We can write to Dr. Davis," suggested Loys; "he must know all about them."

This Loys did, and while awaiting an answer, he and his brother took the poor beast down from its tree and buried it. In a few days Loys received the following letter:—

"My dear young friend:

"Sloths are said to eat any leaves, but I know they eat those of the mora tree, and are very skillful in hiding among its bushy tufts if they hear voices or are frightened. It takes a trained eye to see one of them at the top of these tall trees, and nothing but a rifle-ball will bring them down, as their muscles and bones are so well fitted for hanging on that unless death is very sudden they do not give way. Ask your father to bring you and Halde to the country soon, and believe me,

"Yours very truly,

"E. Davis."

CHAPTER XXVI

NOBODY'S PET

THIS was a big snake that Mr. Francis had bought from an Indian and kept in the garden. Its cage was a strong wooden box faced with iron bars. The natives call this kind of snake a camoudi, but the name which is given it in other countries is boa-constrictor. Boa means an ox; whether those who named it wished to say it is as large as an ox, or that it can kill an ox, cannot be known. Constrictor means that which constricts or draws together, and is well suited to these serpents, as they kill their prey by wrapping themselves around it and pressing it to death.

The boys used neither of these names, but gave the reptile one of their own finding, which was "Nobody's pet." The servants called it "that ugly beast," though in truth the snake was beautifully marked. Its skin was of a dark green color, almost black above, yellowish on the sides, whitish on the stomach, and spotted on the back and sides with black rings having a white centre. When these

skins are dried and varnished, they look like a well-made piece of oilcloth.

The camoudi measured twenty-three feet in length, its body being two feet around. The head was but a small part of the serpent, and seemed to be used simply as a scout that went in advance to discover food for the great body. The wide mouth had a double row of teeth, and the whole palate was covered with bony points. Yet the camoudi never chews, but swallows its prey whole; neither can it be called greedy, in spite of the size of its meals, for it eats but once in nine months or a year.

Mr. Francis put rats, chickens, and a live guinea-pig into the cage, but the snake touched none of them. Mother did not trouble herself to feed this pet; no one offered *it* a milk bottle.

Day after day the brute lay motionless in a corner. Sometimes, when the boys rattled a stick across the iron bars, it would rouse itself enough to dart out its split tongue, this being the only sign of life it gave. Its skin became dull and dry, and its eyes seemed blind. Mr. Francis thought it about to die.

One morning, to every one's surprise, the camoudi appeared in a shining new suit. Then Mr. Francis remembered that snakes change their clothes once a year without the aid of a tailor. The camoudi's eyes were now bright, and the big beast crawled restlessly about the cage.

Mr. Francis, seeing the animal so lively, thought that it might like a breakfast, and put some food in its cage. Its mind, however, was occupied with other things. Having such a nice suit, Mr. Snake wished to show it to his friends; the breakfast remained untouched and the snake disappeared.

When the boys brought this disquieting news, Mr. Francis hurried to the garden to investigate, and found that the bars of the cage had been pressed apart. No doubt the camoudi had placed its flat head sideways between the bars and forced its body through the gap. Search was made in all directions for the runaway, and the police were informed that a camoudi was at large.

You can think how pleased the people of the neighborhood were at the prospect of getting a hug from a hungry snake when returning home late at night. Mrs. Francis was terribly anxious, and could not bear to let the children out of her sight; even in the house no one felt safe. To come upon a crumpled rug or a misplaced door-mat in the dusk was enough to make the nervous scream, and dreams were filled with twisting serpents eager for prey.

Six weeks passed before the camoudi could be found. Then it was discovered only three houses away, coiled in the branches of a low tree that grew over the gate of a young ladies' school. How long the snake had been there, no one knew, but many

people must have passed and repassed beneath the tree, little knowing the danger that threatened them.

The camoudi, having been found, the next trouble was to get it back to its cage. You could not chase, coax, or lead such a beast; in fact, you would be likely to wish to leave it entirely alone. A crowd soon collected and two policemen tried to keep order. Several voices suggested shooting the snake, and Mr. Francis began to think this would be the only way to end the affair, when a black man, newly arrived from the interior, came up to him and said:—

"Me no afraid snakee, me catch he for five dollars."

"Will it be safe?" inquired Mr. Francis, turning to one of the policemen.

"What he know 'bout dat?" asked the man, pointing to the policeman with his thumb. "Make de bargain, you see."

Just then James pushed his way through the crowd, the children following. "Dat man, he George. He catch snake superior," declared James.

Mr. Francis was still in doubt, but finally gave the desired permission, adding, "I will get my gun in case you fail."

"No use for dat, massa. You promise de five dollars when he caught?"

"Yes."

"Den he caught sure. You give me a little tobacco, an' me go fetch he."

"Here is a bit with which to buy some."

While the man went for the tobacco, James was sent for Mr. Francis' repeating rifle. They soon returned. George filled and lit his pipe, and Mr. Francis made sure that his rifle was in order; the snake, meanwhile, lay peacefully coiled in the tree, taking no notice of the noisy crowd. The limb on which the brute rested being low, George was able by standing upon a box to get nearly opposite its head. He then slowly puffed the smoke into the camoudi's face until the animal became drowsy. Whether there was opium or any other drug mixed with the tobacco, the man would not tell.

After smoking a short time, George boldly seized the camoudi by the neck and dragged it to the ground, where, wrapping it around his body, he carried it through the crowd which willingly made way for him. He promenaded the streets for some time in this plight, enjoying the admiration his courage excited and putting on an indifferent air, though the weight of the serpent must have tired him greatly.

When at last George brought the camoudi into the garden, a carpenter who had been sent for was busy strengthening the cage, so that the snake had to be laid on the ground until the work was finished. This change seemed to awaken the animal, and in a moment it began to hiss like a railway engine letting off steam. The carpenter, the servants, and

some idlers from the street scattered quickly; but George, standing firm, tapped the monster on its head with a small rod, saying, "None of dat, Sammy!" and the camoudi ceased hissing.

There was much rejoicing when the snake had been safely caged, though Mrs. Francis could never feel quite certain that the camoudi would not again escape, and often begged her husband to get rid of it. During the winter he could not send it away, as the cold of northern countries would kill it; but when spring came he shipped it to a zoölogical garden in Europe. The snake had been with Mr. Francis ten months when it started on its long voyage. All this time the camoudi never ate. But when it arrived at the end of the journey, it swallowed a rabbit; just to show, as it were, that it felt itself at home.

Nobody's pet left few regrets behind, though it certainly gave as little trouble as a pet well could; except, of course, when it ran away. Halde said he was a *little* sorry, but Mother declared she could now sleep in peace, and many people in the neighborhood shared her feelings.

"Father," asked Loys, "how do snakes creep out of their skins?"

"I suppose among the thick underbrush where they live it is easy for them to rub themselves clear of it. Though how ours managed to do so, I cannot say;

perhaps there was some roughness on the floor of the box."

"He must have thought it a long way out, there was so much of him."

"Ours was by no means the largest of its kind. I have been told of a camoudi skin in the Museum of Surinam that is sixty-two feet long."

"Father," said Halde, "I think camoudis must live on air, like orchids."

"No, my dear, they eat, but not often. I believe, too, that when young and growing they have better appetites. The country villagers find it hard to keep fowls near streams where water-camoudis live, and sometimes a snake will follow a fowl into the hut of its owner. People fish for them with a living chicken tied to a cord. This the camoudi greedily swallows, when the fisherman draws the snake to land and beats out its brains with a club.

"Not long ago, a cook on one of the plantations rose early to make coffee for her master. In lighting her fire she scraped the match upon a post that supported the kitchen roof. The match would not light. She tried on another place, kindled her fire, and continued her work. What was her horror later, when, turning towards the post, she saw a great camoudi twined around it, whose back she had been scratching with her match! You can believe that she did not remain long in his company, but ran screaming

to the master's house for help, and the camoudi's life and body were cut short by a sharp axe in the hands of the butler.

"It is said that a slight tap on any part of the backbone will render a camoudi helpless. However, they are not easily killed. A traveler told me that after shooting one in the head with a rifle-ball he had forced a boat paddle into its mouth in order to see the teeth, when the snake splintered the wood to pieces. They have also a spur near the end of the tail with which to hold on by, and though this weapon is not poisonous, the watermen are very much afraid of it."

"Do camoudis live in the water?" asked Loys.

"There are two kinds; ours was a land-camoudi. However, land-camoudis can swim, and water-camoudis do not always remain in the water; so you are not safe from either, wherever you go. The word *camoudi*, by the way, means in one of the Indian languages a large earthen pot."

At the time of the snake's escape Mrs. Francis had a fright from another cause,—funny on account of the contrast it presented between the great and the small. She was startled one afternoon by hearing Carla and the cook shout, "Come out as fast as you can, the grass is full of bêtes-rouges!"

Rushing to the window, Mrs. Francis saw the brown and yellow heads of her boys emerging from

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A Town in the Hills

the tall grass beyond the garden fence. She knew enough French to understand that bête-rouge means red beast; though what terrible thing threatened the children, she could not tell. Her heart beat fast. Each moment she expected the red beasts would leap into sight. The anxiety of the women showed the danger to be real. She joined her voice to theirs, crying, "Red beasts, the red beasts, come back!"

The boys gave one hasty look around and took to their heels.

Mrs. Francis went downstairs to inquire what animals the grass-plot sheltered. She found cook busy removing the children's blouses and Carla rubbing their backs with a towel.

"What is the matter, are they wet?"

"The bêtes-rouges," answered both women at once.

"What good can rubbing do?"

"It takes them off, ma'am," said Carla, shaking the towel out of the door; cook, meanwhile, passing her hands down the children's bare arms and then clapping them together as if to get rid of something dangerous.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Francis, convinced that all the fuss and fright was due to some crazy negro idea. "I do not believe there is such an animal as a bête-rouge."

"Ei, ei, no bête-rouge, an' de young gentlemen full

of 'em. Look good!" The cook pointed to several small red spots on the children's arms.

"Those are mosquito bites."

"You wait until to-morrow, ma'am, you will see plain enough. I will get some salad oil, it kills 'em."

"I do not want oil on me," objected Loys. "Mother, must I?"

"Just as you like, my dear. I am sure I can see nothing."

"Neither can I, Mother. Cook wants to frighten us with a Nancy story."

"Nancy story! Ei, ei, what he say! He no see bêtes-rouges, he feel 'em soon," muttered cook. "These Buckra too queer." Cook generally forgot her good English when excited.

The woman's prophecy came true. Later, the children were seized with a severe itching from head to foot and felt glad when the time came for taking their bath. However, after they had remained in the water as long as possible the itching continued and even seemed worse. Those small red spots that Mrs. Francis called mosquito bites had become larger and more plentiful. On the ears, the eyelids, all over the body they could be seen dotted about, and no amount of scratching gave relief. At last Mother herself began to scratch and noticed a few red spots on her skin. When Mr. Francis returned to dinner he found the family nearly frantic.

"What on earth is the matter?" he inquired.

"The boys were in the grass beyond the garden, and ever since they have been troubled in this way. I cannot tell what it is. Perhaps a plant has poisoned them."

"Plant indeed! Bêtes-rouges," sniffed Carla, who waited at table.

Before sitting down Mr. Francis looked at one of the spots, and exclaimed, "Why, of course they are!"

"Do you also believe in those mythical beasts?"

"They are a red insect that lives in the grass here, and only constant mowing and rolling can keep a lawn free of them. They burrow into the skin and stick everywhere, even on snakes."

"Are they dangerous?"

"When not attended to they sometimes cause sores; but if the boys grease themselves, the itching will soon disappear. You, also, have a few bites. The wind blows the insects about. I wish we had a microscope to enlarge one. They are scarcely as big as the dot over an *i*, and are a bright red; still you can see them without a lens, if you look carefully."

"I can't, really; I have tried. There is only what seems to be the blood about to come through the skin, as when you prick your finger with a needle."

"But *that* is a bête-rouge!"

CHAPTER XXVII

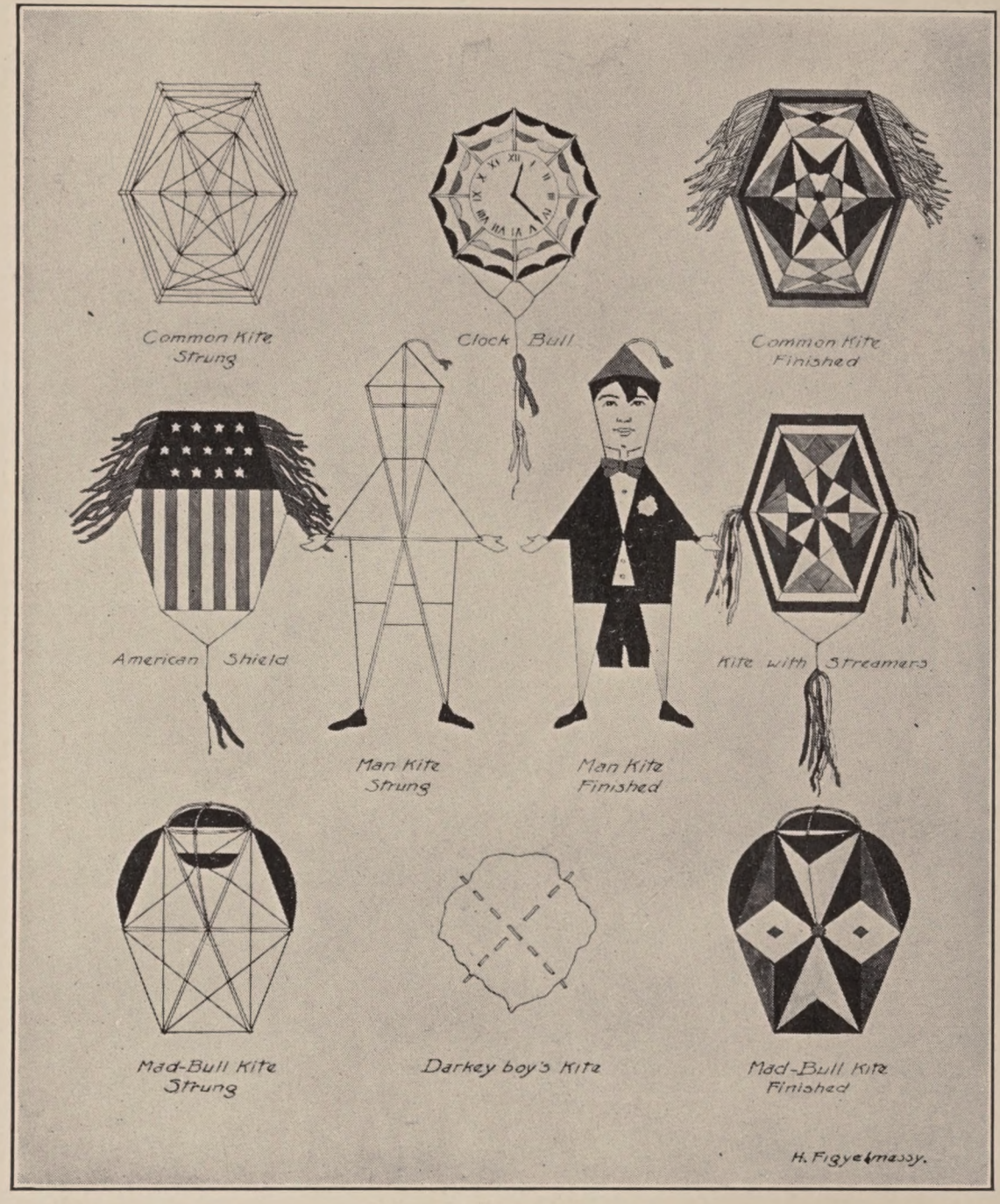
THE KITE SEASON

INSTEAD of being divided into spring, summer, autumn, and winter, as in the States, the tropical year is made up of two wet and two dry seasons. To these the children have added a fifth, which they call the kite season.

Before February scarcely a kite is seen; but from this date they begin to appear as surely as the birds in spring. Few at first, their number increases daily until Easter, when hundreds fill the sky. As the time draws near, kite-making becomes the chief occupation of the young people; the shops are gay with kites, and boys carry them from house to house for sale.

Loys and Halde had soon become acquainted with the children of the town and went every fine evening to the sea-wall, which is the playground of the place. When kite after kite appeared, they too wished to own one and asked James if he knew how to make them.

"Me make you each one, superior, if me hab de instruments."


Common Kite Strung
Clock Bull
Common Kite Finished
American Shield
Man Kite Strung
Man Kite Finished
Kite with Streamers
Mad-Bull Kite Strung
Darkey boy's Kite
Mad-Bull Kite Finished
H. Figyelmessy.

KITES

"What must you have?"

"A bit to buy kite paper."

Mrs. Francis was asked for the bit, and with this James bought tissue-paper of various colors — four sheets for a penny, so he had quite a supply; perhaps this is why he kept two of them for himself.

"Will you hab a singin'-engine, or a mad-bull, or a star kite, or a clock-bull, or a full-moon, or a man kite, or a common kite?" asked James, in his best English and grandest manner when he returned with the paper.

The children looked puzzled.

"Singin'-engines an' bull kites is de same, dey make a superior noise in de air. Dem police don't like 'em."

"Why not?"

"Dey frightens horses wid der buzzin'."

"Then we had better not have one."

"If you flies it in de garden or at de sea-wall, de police no object. But if he see you fly it in de street he take dat same kite home and flies it heself."

The more James talked, the more the boys felt that bull kites must be the very best kind, and the only ones worth having. As James encouraged this opinion, it was soon settled that two bull kites should be made: a mad-bull and a clock-bull.

James then got some light pine wood, a kitchen knife, a reel of strong thread, and a pin. The wood

was easily split into rods; two being seventeen inches long, and the third eleven and a half inches. James, however, did not measure by inches, but by spanning with his thumb and little finger — a favorite way with the black people. To trim these sticks down to the right thickness seemed to be the most important part of the operation, and James paused every now and then in his work to weigh them on the tip of his forefinger, until finally, when satisfied, he scraped them smooth with a piece of broken glass.

This done, James, undaunted by bêtes-rouges, waded through the grass to where a group of bamboos grew, and selecting a few supple stems brought them back.

"Are you going to make a bamboo kite, also?" inquired Halde.

"Dat's for de bull-cage, an' if you look good, you'll see how bulls is produced."

James next stuck the pin through the middle of the sticks and "strung" the kite; which consists not only in joining the ends of the sticks with thread, as in the ordinary kite, but in passing the thread through various notches on the sticks, thus forming a geometrical design looking something like a huge cobweb. The "bull-cage" was made of three strips of bamboo bent and fastened to the top and centre of the kite.

The kite was now ready to be covered. Before this was done, James made another trip into the grass-plot. He stopped by a small tree with dark green leaves and began picking bunches of what looked like grapes.

"Do give us some grapes," asked the children, as he returned.

"Dese is clammy-cherries," said the black boy.

"Are they good to eat?"

"Jest you try one."

The berries were of a greenish white color, with seeds and pulp like those of a grape. They proved to be tasteless and were so sticky that the boys had to use pumice-stone to clean their hands.

Meanwhile James was busy breaking the clammy-cherries and squeezing their sticky pulp on the edges of the kite paper.

"Oh, how nice and handy!" cried Halde. "Mother, do come and look. Here is real paste growing on a tree, just ready to make kites."

Mrs. Francis, who was giving orders to the gardener, approached the group of boys. "Do you think that wonderful, my dear?"

"Why, yes, did you ever see such a thing before?"

"Paste grows on a plant at home."

"I never saw it."

"Oh, yes, you did! Whole fields of it."

"Mother means wheat, because we make paste

from flour, and flour is ground wheat," broke in Loys.

"But you can't catch me that way," replied Halde, nodding his yellow head. "This is much more wonderful, here the paste grows ready-made."

Mrs. Francis laughed and continued her stroll through the garden.

By this time James had nearly covered the kite. Pieces of colored paper had been cut to fit the many triangles and figures formed by the network of threads — each piece overlapping the other about an eighth of an inch; and when this patchwork of paper had been pasted in place, the kite looked like a beautiful stained-glass window.

James laid the kite in the sun to dry and wiped his hands in the grass, which, instead of cleaning them, remained sticking to his fingers.

"It won't come off without soap and water," advised Loys.

"You jest see!" returned the boy, taking up a quantity of fine shell dust from the walk and rubbing it over his hands.

"They are very dirty!"

"But dey is not *sticky!*" and James put on his grand air and began cutting three pieces of paper into the shape of half moons.

"What are these for?" asked Loys.

"Dese is de bulls."

"I thought the bamboo pieces were the bulls."

"Dem is de *place* for de bulls."

James took up the kite, burst another berry, and pasted one of the half moons to a thread stretched across the back of the cage. The half moon thus suspended was free to flutter in the hollow formed by the cage, and made the buzzing sound from which the kite is named. The other half moons were pasted on the upper sides of the kite to reënforce the noise, and a small star was added in the centre as an ornament; after which the mad-bull kite was finished. The boys wanted James to raise it immediately, but he said it must first be quite dry; and, what seemed a queer way of gaining this end, he sprinkled the paper with water.

"Now you have spoiled it!" cried Loys, seeing the kite spotted over with great blotches caused by the drops.

"Buckra knows nuffen 'bout dis business," returned James, as he laid the mad-bull in the sun to dry. "Dem kite soon be tight as a drum."

He was right. The water, drying, shrunk all creases and wrinkles out of the paper, much to the boys' surprise, who were inclined to think James more clever than ever.

"And now you must make mine," said Halde.

"You tink dem animals no want to eat?" answered James.

"But after you feed them, will you make it?"

"One kite enough work for one day," declared James, decidedly.

This was sad news for Halde. James, however, remained firm, for he had another plan in mind. As soon as the children had gone upstairs he stripped a few cocoanut rods and gathered some leaves from the plant that had furnished the fibres to sew the boat. After these fibres were removed from the leaf pulp and dried in the sun, it did not take James long to complete his task. He tied three of the cocoanut rods together, fastened the fibres around their ends, pasted over them the paper he had hidden from the children, and now had a kite of his own.

String for raising it was made from a number of fibres joined end to end, and its tail was but a bunch of grass; nevertheless the kite flew well, and James amused himself all afternoon — at a sufficient distance from the house not to be seen by the children.

CHAPTER XXVIII

KITE-FLYING

NEXT day James was ready to work again; and as all the materials were at hand, the clock-bull kite was soon finished.

Four pine sticks of the same length were needed for this new combination. They were fastened together in the middle and spread apart like the spokes of a wheel. The ends of the sticks were joined with thread, thus making an eight-sided figure. Two other threads were strung in a similar manner around the frame, so that the network presented three eight-sided figures placed one within the other. The space in the centre was covered with a sheet of light drawing-paper, upon which James painted a fairly good representation of a clock-face. There was no "bull-cage" as in the mad-bull kite, the little half moons of paper in this case being set along the two outer threads. They were blue, black, red, and yellow and made a pretty effect, all fluttering and humming in the air together. When this kite has a large star in the centre, instead of a clock-face, it is called a star-bull.

A tail was made for each kite out of bits of material knotted along a string at about a foot apart, and two balls of twine were bought, which James attached to the kites in the usual way. This done, the boys were ready to set out with James for the sea-wall at five o'clock the same evening.

Some thirty kites were already darting through the air when they arrived; most of them common kites, six-sided, with a fringe of paper about a foot long on the two upper sides. These fringes or wings are made by cutting tissue-paper into slits, leaving a strip at the top by which the wing is fastened to the kite. There were also kites having streamers a yard long waving from the ends of the middle cross-stick, the tails being formed of narrow strips of cloth tied in bunches four feet apart.

In a few minutes Loys and Halde had the pleasure of seeing their kites sailing among the others, and James began to give them a lesson in kite-flying. The children, who thought the principal thing was to raise the kite, were surprised to find this to be the least part of the sport.

The kites rushed about, now up, now down, in curves and circles, buzzing and bowing here and there or swooping upon each other like birds of prey; while the boys below swung their arms, pulled, jerked, and shouted, each making an effort to outdo the crowd around him.

Sometimes the string was run quickly out, at other times brought in hand over hand, then waved to and fro, or caught at about a foot from the hand holding it, folded back and allowed to snap forward. Each motion of the hand gave a corresponding movement to the kite in the air. A pretty trick is what is called "sending a message." In order to do this the string is passed through a piece of paper or a leaf which, caught by the wind, is whirled up to the kite.

No one seemed to know more of these tricks or to be more active in carrying them out than James. His arms and legs worked like a windmill and his mouth kept pace. He ran from Loys to Halde, and from Halde back to Loys, urging, helping, and showing them how to manage, until they were quite as excited as himself. The result was that the clock kite and bull kite made the most wonderful plunges, whirls, and somersaults, as well as the loudest buzzing of any on the wall. James and the children were half wild with delight. However, their pleasure was soon to end.

Every now and then a string suddenly snapped and a kite fell to the ground,—this event being met by howls of rage and shouts of triumph. The children naturally thought that the strings had been broken by the force of the wind. This was not the case; they had been *cut*. But how could any one climb halfway up the sky to cut a kite string?

This mean trick, which is known as "raking," is done by the means of sharp bits of glass, called "flakes," chipped off of a bottle and attached to the kite's tail, which, thus armed, sweeps the sky like a scythe and cuts any string that crosses its path.

In spite of James's watchfulness, this is what happened to the mad-bull kite. Halde had almost allowed his clock kite to drop upon a cocoanut tree, and James was putting forth all his energy to save it, when a tall white boy jockeyed his kite towards the mad-bull, and drawing in his string rapidly, shot his kite upwards, its tail slashing across the string of the mad-bull.

The raked string came back limp into Loys's hand, and the bull, left without a guide, fluttered here and there a moment, as if seeking its way; then, half sailing, half sinking, it fell to the ground, where its roaring was forever ended in a trench of muddy water.

The boy who did the mischief, thinking Loys too young to harm him, openly showed his delight by capering about and shouting in sign of victory. But he reckoned without James. No sooner had this nimble lad put Halde's kite into a good position, than, turning, he saw the settling of the bull and the war dance of the victor. Losing no time in laying plans, he bent his head like a ram and went plump into the middle of the other boy's back, butting him to the bottom of the grassy bank on the land side of the

wall. His string being dropped in the fall, the white boy's kite followed fast after the bull and, meeting several kites in its way, caused a tangle of tails and a confusion of torn paper and broken sticks.

This destruction of kites was the result of nearly every evening's amusement. Even if no accident happened, the kites were so frail that an hour in the strong breeze was sure to leave some holes which had to be patched on returning home. The best-made never appeared at the wall more than twice, and if only the tail and ball of string could be saved from the wreck, the owner felt satisfied.

As the season advanced, Loys and Halde themselves became quite skillful in making kites, though they could not succeed with some of the most difficult ones. For instance, the Chinese of the colony made bird kites out of split bamboo, that at a distance could easily be taken for a flock of crows or a flight of curri-curri.

Another odd production seen at the sea-wall was a man kite, six feet high, that required three well-grown lads to manage it. The number of sticks used was the same as for an ordinary kite, only the uprights were longer and their ends did not spread so far apart. The middle cross-rib formed the arms and was ended by hands cut out of cardboard, while feet of the same material were attached to the bottom of the uprights. By connecting the sticks

with light twine a fairly good outline of a man was produced.

It only remained to dress the man; and here a taste for bright colors had been followed. Two pieces of bamboo strengthened the head, and the string passing over the top of one of these formed a pointed cap that was covered with red paper. A red tassel of wool, tacked to the end of the bamboo, ornamented the cap, and two coat tails cut from black paper also fluttered in the wind.

White paper was used for the face, the vest, and the shirt. The coat and shoes were black, the lapels blue, and the leggings brown. The eyes, nose, mouth, and mustache were painted by hand, and the cravat tied from a strip of red paper. The kite tail was hung from between the ankles of the man; while the cord for raising the kite was fastened to the centre, where all the sticks meet, and to both sides of the cap.

A pretty kite made by Loys and Halde was a copy of the American shield, the blue field and white stars covering the upper third of the kite, the red and white stripes filling the lower portion. The wings were red, and the tail was of flaming bits of scarlet flannel that swept through the air like a trail of fire.

All kites, however, were not equally brilliant. Little darkey boys contented themselves with queer-

shaped affairs made from stray pieces of brown wrapping-paper through which cocoanut fibres were passed in and out, and which were raised with bits of string picked up in the streets. Of course these kites never took a place in the sky among the others; but they gave, perhaps, just as much pleasure nearer earth.

After the evening when Loys's string had been cut, James wished to fasten flakes to the children's kite tails. However, Loys did not like the idea, and refused to let him do so.

James called this a "fool Buckra notion." "Now," he went on, "if dat white boy come again to pop your string, will you jest let he be?"

"Do you think the white boy did right?" asked Loys.

"I tink he pop de string."

"Well, was that right?"

"Dat was a cut string, an' a kite in de trench. I want to pay he back what he gib."

"But is that right?"

"Now see here, young massa, if you lend me a bit, ought I keep it?"

"No."

"So you tink I mus' gib back de bit dat is a nice ting to hab, an' keep de cut from a flake dat I don't want."

This reasoning seemed so good that Loys had

nothing more to say, but before going to bed that night he asked his father what he thought of it.

"It is just, as far as it goes; one of the earliest laws is, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.' Only it is our nature to think a wrong done us more serious than it really is, so that if we have the power we are likely to make the punishment greater than the offence. Had you told the policeman on duty he would have taken away the boy's kite."

"Is that all!"

"That would be giving like for like; his kite against yours."

"Mine was better; and besides I did not want to lose it."

"It was no doubt provoking, but the whole loss did not amount to more than six cents. You could not punish any one heavily for that."

The kite season reached its height on Easter Monday, which is a public holiday in British Guiana. The day dawns to the sound of fifes and drums, tin whistles, and triangles. As early as five o'clock in the morning, crowds of boys and young men parade the streets, trying to fill the empty day with noise. Later, people appear in their best clothes, go on excursions, and amuse themselves as in other lands; but the thing peculiar to this place is that at least half of the holiday seekers carry kites, — women and men, boys and girls, even babies in their nurses' arms have them.

A Chinese Coolie Farmer

In the evening Mr. Francis took the children and their mother for a drive to see the kites. Every open lot, the sea-wall, and the parks were thronged with people whose eyes were turned heavenward. The kites were so numerous that each one had only a small space to sail in, and it was rare for any to remain whole longer than ten minutes; but as one fell another took its place. It would be hard to say which was more crowded, earth or sky. The ground was covered with pieces of broken sticks, wriggling tails, and tangled strings; the telegraph wires, house-tops, chimneys, trees, bushes, and trenches had a share — yet the amount still flying never seemed to grow less.

The crowd was made up of nearly as many colors as the kites — black, white, brown, and yellow; African, Creole, East Indian, and Chinese, with a few Europeans. But though noisy and restless, there was little quarreling among them. One of the most enterprising was a black girl dressed in pale pink muslin trimmed with white cotton lace. She had a flake to her kite tail and was raking her neighbors' strings with great good humor and success, when a policeman took her kite away.

Some danced on the grass to the music of a concertina and guitar. Others played ball or cricket, in which games the women also took part. Sailing toy boats on the pond in the park was another amuse-

ment much enjoyed by the grown folks, — and so the day wore on.

As Loys and Halde passed back in the early twilight they found most of the people also turning homewards. The sky was left to the stars, without a spot on its blue, but the earth still showed signs of the merry contest. The sound of music and merry-making continued throughout the night, and it was not until the dawn that Easter Monday and the kite season were ended.

The children, however, continued to make kites, and spent many pleasant afternoons in the breezy tower, where there was no danger of raking or of other boys interfering with their sport.

Here they would bring up a rug and a chair for their mother, who often sat and read stories to them as they played. Sometimes they would tie the strings to the railing and lie comfortably on the rug watching their kites; and from here they also saw the curri-curri sail in from the coast, the kiskadies build their nests, and the vultures come home to roost. It was much better than the sea-wall.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE DRY SEASON

AS the dry season advanced, the stifling rays of heat shone upon the baked earth, only to be reflected back to the sky, where hung heavy clouds from which no rain ever dropped.

The shadows kept out of sight, and you had to wear a wide-brimmed hat to shade your face at all. To see a shadow all drawn together at the edges sneaking under a wagon, a horse, or a little dog was really funny.

The first time the boys noticed this sight they could not help laughing. Halde said that it looked as if the shadows were afraid to come out.

"That is because," explained Mr. Francis, "we are near the equator where the sun is directly overhead."

The trees looked sad, and the plants were so covered with dust they scarcely lived. The gardener was kept busy watering, but the thirsty ground seemed never satisfied; every crack like an open mouth cried for more. In the street the sprinkler

no sooner went by than the freshness it brought was lost in the dust and heat.

The greatest enjoyment during these months was a bath, some people taking as many as three a day. When out walking in the evening, the boys would often see whole families of little darkey children gathered around a hydrant in the street, their mother in their midst pouring water over them with a large half calabash, while the youngsters screamed with delight.

This was all very well while the water lasted; but when week after week went by and no rain fell, when weeks counted together made months and still there was no rain, then even bathing had to be limited.

The first thought on the subject came to the Francis family when the cook one morning appeared at the dining-room door holding a key in her hand.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Francis.

"I bring it to you, ma'am, so that no one can say I steal the water."

"She has been giving water to all her friends," muttered Carla, who was waiting on the table.

"What is the matter?" again asked Mrs. Francis, looking from one to the other.

"The vat is more than half empty," replied Carla.

"It is not my fault. I use as little as possible," rejoined the cook.

"The vat is more than half empty," repeated Carla.

"It's the young gentlemen," returned cook.

"We have never touched the water vat," spoke up Loys.

"Don't you bathe in white water every day?"

"Of course we bathe, every one bathes. What has that to do with it?"

"You can't bathe without water, and if you go on as you do the vat will soon be empty. I won't be responsible." Cook laid the vat key on the table, adding as she left the room, "Whoever heard of bathing with white water in the dry season!"

"The woman acts as if she were crazy," said Mrs. Francis, puzzled by the cook's strange behavior.

Mr. Francis looked amused. "It is easy to see that this is your first dry season in the tropics. Do you know why it is called dry?"

"Because no rain falls."

"Just so! And if that is the case, where are we to get drinking water after our vats are empty?"

"But how can we do without bathing?"

"You can still bathe, but you must not use the 'white water,' as cook calls it; take hydrant water instead."

"It looks horrid, it is nearly black!" declared Loys.

"Although dark, it is clean water. The color

comes from the many leaves that choke the rivers in the great forests. People do not drink it when there is other water to be had, but there is no pleasanter bathing water."

"Perhaps it may turn us black," suggested Halde.

"No, my dear. You can splash away without fear."

Mrs. Francis thought the water question was now settled; this was by no means the case. Not a day passed without some one begging for a pailful, and Mrs. Francis did not have the heart to refuse such a simple request. It was soon found that she was the very worst person to whom the key could have been intrusted. The cook came again to complain.

"But what can the poor people do?" exclaimed Mrs. Francis.

"Let them go and buy water from the public vats. When these are empty, it will be time to give; that is, if we have any ourselves."

"Buy water?"

"Yes, ma'am. Have you not seen those large tanks near the public buildings? They are full of white water which is sold for a penny a pail."

"Very well, cook. I will give the beggars money instead of water."

Next morning Mr. Francis took his wife, Loys, and Halde to see the water given out from the public tanks. What a crowd was there! Women neatly

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CARRYING WATER

In these Earthen Jars the Water will keep Cool for Several Hours

dressed, women in rags and tatters, boys, girls, and men awaiting their turn to be served at the faucet. Some were quarreling and fighting, others laughing and joking, while others again lay on the ground beating a tattoo on their pails to which they kept time with their idle heels. On one side was a long file of people leaving with their filled pails on their heads, and opposite was another line, just as long, of people arriving. Everything that could hold water was brought out: oil cans, fruit tins, butter jars, soup bowls, and calabashes being used to hold the precious liquid.

"Here the advice to lay up for a rainy day should be reversed," remarked Mrs. Francis, as the family started for home. "These people should lay up for the dry weather."

Finally the store of rain water in the city vats gave out, and the people had to be contented with the brown water of the hydrants. This, however, soon became limited, when the streams from which the waterworks drew their supplies ran dry; and at last the hydrant could be kept open but two hours a day.

Everywhere, now, the unfortunate natives could be seen in the streets seeking for a pond or a trench that might still contain a little water. Many would bring their animals with them: the donkey boys dragged their sad-looking burros, an old darkey

woman led a cow, while a coolie rode astride of a bony horse. And if a pool were found, what a scramble there would be! Often more water was spilt than was saved; but the animals, at least, got their fill before they could be pushed away.

The dry season continued. Clouds there were, great masses of them, but it seemed as if they had forgotten how to rain. The government found it necessary to send steamboats up the river beyond the tide to bring down hogsheads of water. Quite a trade was carried on in this way by boatmen who made trips on their own account. Those not having barrels simply brought their boats as full as they would hold without sinking, and people crowded the wharves to buy this water, sometimes waiting for an hour to get their turn, and having to walk another hour to and from their homes.

The streets were watered with sea-water, a supply of which was also taken into one of the ponds in case of fire. The papers were filled with accounts of the distress in the colony, and if a few drops of rain happened to fall anywhere, it was immediately telegraphed, and formed part of the latest news. Water, or rather the want of water, was the topic of the day.

Loys and Halde now understood why the seamstress had said, "We like the rain!"

CHAPTER XXX

THE PONY CART

THE dry season brought an unexpected pleasure for Loys and Halde. Since the town had become unhealthy with the long drought, their father was afraid for the children to walk much, and yet it was bad for them to be always in the house. For this reason he bought them a pretty little pony and cart, with a seat in it just big enough to hold two.

The cart came from America. Its body was of yellow wood, varnished, the wheels and shafts red, the hubs black. Their pony, which was in reality a small horse and a native of the colony, the children called Darling. Well shaped, a sorrel, with black mane and sweeping tail, a fast trotter and gentle, the little fellow had no equal in town. Black harness shining with silver buckles, a whip, a knee cloth, and brown cushions on the seat completed the turnout.

When the pony cart drove into the garden and the boys heard it was theirs, they were too delighted to

speak, except in little screams and cries, with many oh's and funny sounds between that in some way seemed to express their joy better than words.

The first sentence that could be understood from Loys was, "May we try it just now, Father?"

"Without waiting a single minute?" added Halde.

Then Mr. Francis remembered that the only experience the boys had in driving was with sleepy old Mike at Bywater, and he feared it would not be safe to trust them with an animal fresh from the pasture. James, however, solved the difficulty by saying in his usual grand way, "Me can drive horses superior."

"Where did you learn?"

"In de country, sir. Me live wid a man who have many horses. Me can fox, too," added James, meaning the motion of rising and falling in the saddle with the horse, as is done by men who follow the hounds.

"Let me see what you can do."

The boy jumped into the wagon, and Mr. Francis soon found that he had not been boasting. Loys and Halde were permitted to go with him, and though the seat was a little small for three they enjoyed their drive greatly.

James was now a made man. Mr. Francis got a saddle so that the boy could ride postilion and leave the seat for the children. His livery was a

neat suit of blue with silver buttons, white corduroy breeches, top-boots, and a cap. He had a room in the stable, regular food and wages, and could dress nicely. What a contrast to the "gentleman" in the rice sack who came a few months before to pick cocoanuts!

The children were delighted with their cart and went out every evening; James "foxing" on the pony, and their little Skye terrier, Snap, sitting between them on the seat and barking every now and then to show what a good time he was having. Sometimes they took a friend for a drive, sometimes their mother — all together the cart gave them the greatest amusement they had known since coming to the colony.

Mr. Francis also bought a saddle for Loys and Halde, and taught them to ride. They soon acquired a firm seat, and when their parents went out driving the boys would accompany them, taking turns on the pony.

All this was pleasant indeed. Unfortunately James had not been accustomed to regular work; and good habits, like industry and attention, take time to grow. Duty and self-control were virtues unknown to him, and as they are hard to practice, even by boys who have often heard of them, it cannot be wondered that James did not succeed.

First, there was trouble about rubbing the horse

down after the evening drive. Then as James had always taken his meals when he could get them, he thought a horse might do the same, and fed poor Darling at any hour of the day.

In vain Mr. Francis said, "This won't do, James." Cook had to give out the oats at the proper time and see that James put it into the manger. Sometimes even this did not answer, for the boy could not be found and cook had to feed the horse herself.

As the children drove out but once a day, Mr. Francis ordered James to exercise the horse every morning. This order he obeyed, but it was soon found that the attraction was a race-course near town where he took Darling and ran him nearly to death.

Mr. Francis again warned James to behave and forbade him to race the horse any more. The next day, however, as Mr. Francis was shaving by the window he saw Darling's tail vanish through the gate. James, thinking that no one was up at such an early hour, had taken the horse away unfed and brought him back from the race-course without a dry hair.

For his disobedience James got a thrashing, which he well deserved, and for two or three days succeeded in being a good boy. At the end of this time, Mr. Francis on entering the stable could scarcely believe his eyes. There stood poor Darling, his

mane fringing the top of his neck like a mule's, his forelock cut short over his eyes, and his beautiful long tail trimmed up to the flesh.

"What did you do that for?" asked Mr. Francis, in amazement.

"Me thought he look more better dat way."

No one could tell whether James really thought so, or if he had done the thing out of revenge for his beating; but Mr. Francis was so disgusted that he told the boy he would keep him no longer.

To this Loys and Halde greatly objected. James mended their toys or made others, he could tell nice stories on rainy days, he knew about plants, trees, and birds, and had become such a part of their lives that they were very fond of him.

"Father, you have often said that good habits take time to grow," pleaded Loys. "Do give James another chance."

"His good habits may have just begun to sprout," added Halde, encouragingly.

"I am afraid the ground is already filled with bad ones," returned Mr. Francis. "Do you remember when you thought that if James were well dressed he would be a nice boy? It seems to me the more he is dressed, the worse he becomes."

"Only try him again, Father."

"I am willing. Though if James does not also try, it will be of no use."

"Halde and I will both beg him to try hard."

After this, it seemed as though James really grew better; but the pony now caused the family anxiety. The poor horse became thinner each day and appeared to be ill. James asked for more oats, claiming that the pony did not have enough to eat, and Mrs. Francis ordered that five pints be given at a meal, instead of three. Still Darling showed no improvement. His hip bones stuck out, his ribs looked like the hoops on a barrel, his head hung listlessly down, and, with his rough mane and short tail, a more miserable animal could not be seen.

Mr. Francis sent for a horse-doctor who looked very wise and gave Darling some large pills. The pony took the pills, the food disappeared from his manger as usual, yet he continued to grow thinner. No one could explain the mystery, until on going to the stable one morning just after feeding time, Mr. Francis found the manger bare, and it struck him as strange that the pony could finish his oats so quickly.

James, being questioned on the subject, looked guilty. Mr. Francis had him watched, and it was soon found that the boy, instead of feeding Darling, had sold the oats to a cabman.

"Me a bad boy for true," admitted James, when he saw that his dishonesty had been discovered. "But jest you whip me and try me again."

"A boy must have courage enough to be good

without a whipping, or he will never be worth anything," said Mr. Francis, sternly.

"Den try me without a whipping."

"You deserve to suffer for your cruelty to the horse, James, but I will not whip you. As soon as I can get a boy in your place I will do so. Meanwhile, cook must feed the horse."

To get another boy who could manage the pony was not easy. Two weeks went by, and during this time James did so much better that nothing more was said about sending him away. Pay-day came and he received his wages; but alas! here ended his good behavior. That evening he drove so recklessly that he ran over a woman in the street.

James' care and skill in riding had been his best points, and now that he could not be trusted in this respect it was useless to think of keeping him any longer. Even Loys and Halde had nothing to say in his defence.

It was soon known that the place was vacant, and a number of boys applied for the position. Every morning Darling's saddle was put on and the would-be grooms rode up and down the garden to show what they could do. Mr. Francis and the gardener stood by in case of accident. This was very necessary, for a fast trotting horse is not easy to ride. In fact they all did so badly that Mr. Francis concluded he would have to train a groom himself.

The boy's name was William. At first he would insist on mounting from the right side, instead of the left. He would have his stirrups too short, and rose so high at each jolt that he looked as if about to dive over the horse's head. His elbows stood out on each side like the sails of a windmill, and he pulled so hard at the bridle that Darling, whose mouth was tender, danced about with pain.

The lesson began: "Are your stirrups just long enough that you can rise on them the least bit in trotting?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, mount. Stop! Start from the left side."

"Yes, sir."

"Sit straight."

"Yes, sir."

"Hold the reins loosely."

"Yes, sir."

"Take the whip in the right hand, laying it across the bridle."

"Yes, sir."

"When you want the pony to go, speak to him, then touch him lightly with the whip. Mind, speak before you touch him."

"Yes, sir."

"When you want him to stop, don't jerk the bridle, but first say *Whoa*, then tighten the reins gradually."

"Yes, sir."

"Hold on with your thighs and rise as little as possible with the horse's trot."

"Yes, sir."

"Now, off!"

The boy started down the garden and Darling threw up his head impatiently.

"You are dragging at the bridle," called Mr. Francis.

"If me don't hold on, sir, me fall off."

"Stop! Where did you ever ride before?"

"No place. Me work on board a ship."

Mr. Francis laughed. "No wonder you hold on tightly; you think you are still at the masthead. Press the horse with your thighs, and you will soon feel safe."

William showed great eagerness to learn, and it was not long until he was able to ride out with the children. He was a trustworthy boy and took good care of the pony, which, being now regularly fed and watered, became once more the healthy, spirited Darling of old.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE COOLIE HOUSE

THE children soon became fond of William; he knew many Nancy stories and was even more skillful with his hands than James.

When they told him of the boat and the kites James made for them, he said jealously: "Oh, dat nigger, he know nothing! Me make you a coolie house."

"What is a coolie house?" asked Loys.

"Dat am de house de coolie live in. You buy de materials in de market and me put it up."

"Wouldn't that be lovely, Halde, to have a house for our very own! But now that we have the pony cart, Father would not want to give us anything so expensive; and I only have two dollars in my money bank."

"I have one," added Halde, cheerfully.

"Dat be plenty enough," said William. "Coolie house cost two dollars."

The boys ran to their parents. "Mother," exclaimed Loys, who arrived first in the room, "William says he can put up a coolie house for us if we buy the materials."

"It only costs two dollars, and you can get them at the market," supplemented Halde, who was not far behind.

"But, my dears, William must be joking. Who ever heard of buying a house at the market, and for such a price."

"William is right," said Mr. Francis. "You can buy everything that is needed to build the house: the posts and cross-pieces for the framework, a matting of split reeds which is used for the walls, and bunches of long-leaved reeds with which the roof is made. I don't know what the price of such a house is, but as coolies seldom earn more than two dollars a week they cannot afford a palace."

"Then may we have our house?" asked Loys, as spokesman for both.

"I have no objections, if you are sure you want it."

"Indeed we do, Father!" exclaimed the boys, with conviction.

"Very well; to-morrow you can go with William and make your first investment in real estate."

The boys began to dress before dawn and were at the market by six. William led the way to the wharf, alongside of which lay a number of boats filled with supplies of all kinds from the interior. Seeing a punt laden with wood, William asked the man if he had any posts for building a coolie house. There happened to be enough left for one house,

the posts and cross-pieces already cut the right length and notched so that they could be easily fitted together. The boatman also had the leaves for the thatch, and coils of tough bush-rope vines for tying the framework in place.

It required some time and much arguing on the part of William to persuade the man that anything above two dollars for such a dwelling would be robbery. The boatman finally agreed to the price and unloaded the materials on the wharf.

Loys handed over the money and looked helplessly at the pile. "We surely can't carry it home. It is too heavy."

"You mus' get a donkey cart," advised William.

This was done, and Halde had his dollar changed to pay the driver. He wished also to buy a pine-apple for his mother, but William stopped him, saying, "You keep dat money; we have yet no sides to dat house."

"Will we buy the sides to-day?"

"No; we build dat house first."

The cart was unloaded in the garden and a shady site decided upon. William, with the help of the gardener, scraped the ground level and beat it down to form the floor. The boys then fetched their father's yardstick and staked off the plan, which was ten feet long and eight feet wide. Four deep holes were dug for the corner posts, and fourteen smaller

A Coolie Girl dressed in her Best

holes for the side posts, after which the real work of putting up the house was begun.

It took a week to get the framework into place and a few more days to cover the roof. The strangest thing about the little house, however, was neither the short time in which it was built, nor its cheapness, but the fact that everything was tied together instead of being nailed.

The walls remained yet to be covered, and the boys made one more trip to the market, where Halde's money was spent for mats of reeds. These were fastened to the framework, a large opening being left in front for the door, and two other openings at the sides for the windows.

Loys and Halde were very proud of their house, which they continued to improve whenever they had time. They hung bright prints on the walls, moved in a table and some chairs, put up window-curtains, planted jessamine vines around the door, and made the place in every way as cosy as possible.

Here were spent many pleasant hours. Every fine morning the boys would have their breakfast served in the coolie house, and such a jolly breakfast it would be, with their animal friends as guests. Billy, the toucan, was a steady visitor, as well as the troupial; Snap, of course, was ever present, and poor Hanna would be let out of her cage now and then to join the party. Darling, it was decided, was too

big to be invited; but sometimes there would be a noise of hoofs outside, and pretty soon the pony's head would appear through the window after a lump of sugar. Other parties were given in the afternoon for the boys' school friends, and in the evening Loys and Halde would sit at their *own* door reading their books or studying their lessons.

The dry season did not end without the boys becoming what Dr. Davis called "better acquainted" with the ants. One night, shortly after Halde went to bed, he called out to his mother that something was biting him. Going to his room, Mrs. Francis found that a swarm of black ants had overrun the bed and were attacking him on all sides. Carla beat out the mattress thoroughly and changed the covers, but Halde preferred sleeping with his brother for the night.

Next day Mrs. Francis had the room scrubbed, and poured boiling water into all the cracks that she could see.

"It is of no use, ma'am," said Carla; "that will not keep the ants away."

"What will?" inquired Mrs. Francis.

"Nothing!"

"Nonsense, Carla; you don't mean to say we must sit still and be eaten up."

"If Coushee ants come, you would not sit still, ma'am; they clear out the whole house before them

and drive the owners away. But this kind only tease a little."

The "teasing" took many forms. The next night, in spite of the scrubbing and hot water, Loys was attacked in his bed. The cook advised tying tow around the feet of the bedstead. This odd remedy was tried, and the little insects, bewildered by the tangle of fibres, were unable to pass the barrier.

There were, however, few places that they could not reach. The feet of the safe in the pantry were stood in tins of soapy water, but the ants attempted to cross in such numbers that enough drowned to make a bridge for the others.

No shelf was too high for them. They emptied a can of sewing-machine oil, a bottle of cough medicine, and a box of salve; and a lock having been greased, no one could open the door without getting a few bites.

The cook had the most trouble. If any food was left uncovered, or a spoon that had been used was carelessly forgotten, hundreds came to the feast, the greedy creatures, in their search for a dinner, even walking up the pots on the stove when the fire was not too hot.

They went foraging on all sides, and when one of their number found a dainty morsel he would rush off to Ant-town and bring back an army of his fellows to drag the prey home. Sometimes they would

attack a live worm too heavy to carry away, and after stinging it to death, the whole colony would come out and picnic in the open air until it was all eaten.

Nothing was too large or too small for them. One night they attacked a mouse that had been caught in a trap, and in the morning nothing was left but its skeleton. They also climbed down the string from which hung a bird-cage, and killed a pet mocking-bird that belonged to Mr. Francis.

A brood of young thrushes came near meeting the same fate. Their nest, which had been built on the limb of a small cocoanut tree, was blown down by a gust of wind and had landed on top of an ant-hill. It was not often that the ants had such a feast laid at their very gates. If any of them were sick in bed that day, they must have got up to join the slaughter. The baby thrushes were too young to fly, and could only chirp in a pitiful way. Before they were much hurt, however, Loys, attracted by their cries, came to their rescue.

The restless little creatures were found everywhere: on the cakes and jam, on the flowers and the fruit, in the cups and saucers — one did not even dare drink a glass of water in the dark. They were red, black, and white, large and small, winged and without wings. Some built in trees, making nests of mud two feet around, some built on the ground, and some beneath it. But whatever their way of living, the seventy

different kinds of ants that infest Guiana seem to have one aim in common — to clear the world of everything except themselves.

At last the welcome raindrops began to fall and the frogs were heard filling the ponds with noise — a sure sign of wet weather. The ants then left the house to feed on the young verdure, and for a time the house was rid of the worst of them.

"Father," said Loys one evening, as he stood in the dusk by the dining-room window, "there is a singular tree in our neighbor's garden. Every night it looks withered, and in the morning it is just as fresh as ever."

"That is queer," answered Mr. Francis; "but come downstairs and we will search the cause."

The tree covered a space larger than a circus tent. Its rough limbs laced the air in every direction, looking as if they must break off from the trunk by their own weight. This heavy framework supported a mass of green, which rose like a gently sloping meadow and trembled with the slightest breeze.

"This is called a saman tree," observed Mr. Francis. "While it seems the desire of the palm to reach as great a height as possible, the saman tree only thinks of spreading out. The width of this one is twice its height. What a fine shelter it would make for an army, except for one thing."

"What is that, Father?"

"The leaves are placed opposite each other on their stem, as those of the locust tree, and at night each leaf closes against the one facing it. I wonder if the tree finds it troublesome putting her million children to sleep when dusk begins, and waking them with each new day. Such a family! The woman who lived in a shoe had an easy task in comparison."

Some time later the tree bloomed. At least twenty thousand flowers studded the dark green dome, making an enormous bouquet which measured fifty feet across. Each flower was a circle about three inches across, formed of thread-like petals, white at the base and bluish pink at the ends. Nothing could be a greater contrast than these delicate blossoms quivering in the sunlight, and the rugged trunk, heavy limbs, and dark shadows below; and what a feast they made for humming-birds, bees, butterflies, and winged insects large and small!

The boys had another flowery surprise at about this time. The thread-and-needle plant, from which James had taken his kite string, was seen swelling and throwing up a huge stalk from the centre of its fat green leaves. This grew until it measured eighteen inches around the base and reached a height of thirty-four feet. Along this pole appeared a number of branches, which later were filled with bell-shaped flowers about an inch long.

"Boys, do you think you could count how many

flowers there are on this stalk?" asked Mr. Francis, when the plant was in full bloom.

"That would take weeks!" exclaimed Loys.

"Come, let us try," insisted his father. "The branches will not be difficult to count."

"Oh, no!" and after a few minutes' busy silence both boys shouted, "Forty."

"Now, count the small branches on one large one. This branch near us will do."

"It has thirty," answered Loys, ahead of his brother.

"Some branches have more, some less. Now count the flowers on one small twig."

"That is easy! This one has twelve."

"I have brought a piece of paper and a pencil. We have only to multiply forty by thirty, and the product by twelve. How many do you suppose that makes?"

"Isn't it better you tell us, Father?" suggested Halde.

"Fourteen thousand four hundred flowers!"

"Are you quite sure you are right, Father?"

"This is what is known as making an average. But I am sure it is not too many, for I have read of a plant bearing sixteen thousand. It is called the century plant, because ignorant people believed that it bloomed only when a hundred years old, and then burst suddenly into flower with a loud report."

"How old do you think this one is?"

"About four years old. The plant generally blooms in that time and dies after remaining in flower nine months and throwing out a number of suckers, from which the new plants are produced. I know a place along the road where there are several full-grown plants. We must go and see if they are in bloom."

That evening the family drove to the place. It was a beautiful sight. Five plants stood in a row, their huge poles covered with a shower of yellow blossoms, seventy thousand of them, shining like gold against the pale blue sky.

CHAPTER XXXII

SEEING BETTER THAN GUESSING

INSTEAD of spending one year in British Guiana, as they had first intended, the family had remained several years in the tropics. At last the return home was spoken of. The boys were indeed sorry to leave their friends, their pets, and their lovely garden; but when they saw their mother happy and smiling as she went about the house getting ready, they, too, began to think that nothing could be better than "going home."

Some time before starting Mr. Francis said, "My dear boys, you are now older than when we came out, and should try to know something of the places we may see on our voyage."

"There is nothing but water and flying-fish and seaweed all the way. I remember quite well," replied Loys.

"There will be more than that this trip. I am going to take a steamer that touches at some of the islands of the West Indies. How would you like to stop at Robinson Crusoe's island?"

"Oh, do, Father!" shouted Halde; "I want so much to talk with him."

"You forget that Robinson is only a man out of a story-book."

"Then he never had an island at all," said Loys, looking disappointed.

"His island is there, but Robinson was never on it," replied Mr. Francis, shaking his head.

"How can that be?"

"Stories are of two kinds: those of impossible beings, such as giants and fairies, who no doubt were believed in when the tales were first told; and those of people who, although they never lived, are made to appear real and are placed in real surroundings. The best modern stories are of real life, and 'Robinson Crusoe' is one of this kind. Would you like to hear how it came to be written?"

The boys both answered that "of course they would," and Mr. Francis began: —

"'Robinson Crusoe' was written in 1719, almost two hundred years ago, by an Englishman named Daniel Defoe. Shortly before that time, Alexander Selkirk, a Scotchman, sailed to the Pacific, where, it appears, he quarreled with every one on board, until, upon his request, both captain and crew agreed to put him on shore at the first land they sighted. This happened to be the island of Juan Fernandez, which is on the west coast of South America. Here, with a

few scant provisions left by the captain, and whatever he could manage to bring down with his gun, Selkirk lived four years and a half, when he was rescued by a passing ship and taken back to England. Defoe had the sense to see in this adventure a good foundation for a story, and wrote 'Robinson Crusoe' eight years after Selkirk's return."

"But how are we going to get home by the *west* side of South America?" inquired Loys, who had been studying geography.

"We are not going that way. Many people have made the mistake of accepting Juan Fernandez as Robinson Crusoe's island. I have even seen a child's geography in which it is so marked. But beyond the first idea, Defoe took very little from Selkirk's adventure."

"Where, then, do you think is Robinson's island, Father?" asked Halde, becoming interested.

"Tobago suits Defoe's description better than any other island: it can be considered to lie in the 'mouth or gulph of the mighty river Oroonoko,' as the currents east and west of the island are caused by that river; it has coral reefs, hills and valleys; ships or the boats of savages could go or be driven to it in a storm; and Trinidad can be seen from it on a clear day."

"And are we really going there?"

"It will be our first stop."

"William is from Tobago. Let us ask him if he ever heard of Robinson Crusoe," suggested Halde.

"Just as you like," agreed Mr. Francis, and the next moment he could hear the boys questioning the groom.

"William, do you know anything about Robinson Crusoe?"

"He one of de old time folks, he dead too long. But me see dat cave where he live."

"Are you sure?"

"Me sure, sure! It about three mile from Scarborough. Me been to dat same cave too often."

Halde waited no longer, but rushing back to Mr. Francis, called out while still on the stairs: "Oh, Father, Robinson Crusoe did truly live! William has seen his very cave at Tobago."

Mr. Francis laughed.

"Now, Father," said Loys, just entering, "don't you think William ought to know? He has been there and you have not. Besides, I would rather believe it, and I think I will."

"Many people reason in the same way, my Loys. They believe what suits them rather than search for the truth."

"But we have searched, and William says Robinson is true."

"I know the natives of the West Indies generally believe Crusoe to be a real man and look upon him

as the first settler of Tobago. Many of them who have never heard of Christopher Columbus can tell you the whole history of Robinson Crusoe."

"Then why should he not be true?" persisted Loys.

"If you read the book carefully, you will see that neither Robinson nor Defoe were ever in the tropics."

"Oh, Father! How can any one write about a place he has never seen?"

"Defoe could hear and read about the place he described; for Columbus discovered Tobago in 1498, and at the time of the story the island was settled by English and Dutch colonists. Nothing, however, could make up for the author not having been there himself; and, as was natural, his book contains many mistakes."

The boys were still unconvinced, and Mr. Francis proposed that their mother read the book aloud in the evenings, so they might talk over the different things mentioned in the story.

The children, who loved nothing better than to hear their mother read, agreed to this plan.

Next day, after the tea things had been taken away, Loys brought the book.

"We will now open the trial of Robinson Crusoe," announced Mr. Francis. "I will prosecute, and you boys must defend his statements. Mother will

be the Judge and William a witness. Who shall begin?"

"The cave must be true, for William saw it," shouted Halde.

"Tobago is largely composed of soft limestone, and caves no doubt are to be found there; so we will let Robinson have his cave. But how about the ants that must have come to eat his stores? He forgets to mention them."

At this, Loys ran downstairs to William and asked if there were ants in Tobago.

"Yes, plenty, jest like here," was the reply.

The evidence being against him, Loys had to admit this to be an oversight, for he knew the trouble these little pests could give.

"And snakes?" continued Mr. Francis. "Robinson never speaks of them."

This time Halde ran to William. "Any snakes in your island, William?"

"Plenty! Black snakes, an' yellow-tails, bad, bad. Camoudi there too."

"Still, Robinson might not have happened to meet them," remarked Halde, on returning.

"Traveling about as he did during twenty-eight years, that is not likely. He must have also seen alligators, lizards, big and little, and iguanas."

"Are they really there?"

"Certainly."

"Perhaps he did see them, and got so frightened that he was ashamed to tell any one," said Halde, after a pause.

There was a shout of laughter in which every one joined. Mr. Francis called Halde a clever lawyer, then went on: —

"The noisy tree frogs in the still night, when Robinson wished to sleep, and the land frogs and bats, — would he not have noticed them?"

Halde being silent, Loys felt the answer rested with him. "After all, Father, those things are not important. Robinson had to be thinking of getting food. He could not eat frogs and snakes and ants, so he did not bother about them. Now the minute he sees goats, you hear of it, because they are useful."

"A good argument, Loys, but he could not have seen goats. They are not native on the island, and unless left by a passing ship would not have been there."

Mrs. Francis stopped the discussion by saying that, if she did not soon begin reading, they would hear nothing before bedtime.

"Please, Mother, read from the time when Robinson got to the island."

Mrs. Francis did as desired, and the boys listened carefully, that they might be ready for the next discussion. They also questioned William the following

day, and by evening felt they knew a great deal about Tobago.

"One thing always present, and impossible for any man living in the tropics to forget, is the heat," were Mr. Francis' first words when they again seated themselves around the table.

"Robinson often speaks of the heat," objected Loys. "Don't you remember he writes in his journal that if he had clothes he could hardly have worn them?"

"Yes; and later he dresses himself in goatskins, and poor Friday also. He speaks of the heat, but forgets the effects of heat. When he kills a goat, he tells of it lasting him a long time, whereas fresh meat would have been entirely spoiled in a day."

"But turtles are true," broke in Halde; "William says they are plentiful in Tobago."

"And any amount of fish, and parrots, and pigeons," added Loys.

Mr. Francis nodded assent. "But at the same time Robinson saw penguins and seals, neither of which live in Tobago, while he does not notice those queer-looking pelicans along the shore, nor the beautiful little humming-birds, nor the thrushes, whose song would have surely recalled his home."

"Still, he found cocoanut trees, oranges, limes, tobacco, and sugar-cane. William says there are whole plantations of sugar-cane in Tobago."

"That is true, Loys, but Defoe made a mistake in thinking sugar-cane to be a native of the West Indies. It was introduced there from India in 1520; only Robinson could not have found it on an island that he says had never before been visited by a white man. It is the same with goats, which are not native to the West Indies, although they were taken there by the early explorers. The grapes that he found in such abundance were another mistake; for the vines do not thrive well in the tropics, and those that are here were originally brought over from Europe."

"You want to leave poor Robinson nothing to eat," pouted Halde.

"No, indeed, he could have picked pineapples, guavas, and many other fruits growing wild in the woods. For a drink, he could have had cocoa; the tree bearing it is a native of the West Indies. Deer were also in plenty, which he could have tamed as he did his goats. There was red pepper for his soup, and nuts of various kinds for dessert — I wonder he did not make better use of his eyes!"

"He did use his eyes, Father; only he says that he knew very little of plants, and so he might have poisoned himself had he tasted everything," explained Loys.

Mother now began to read, after which the children went to bed.

The next evening Loys finished his tea in a hurry, and Mr. Francis, seeing he had something on his mind, said, "Well, my boy, what is it?"

"I am thinking that Robinson was all right with his barley and rice, because he brought the seed to the island himself."

"He might have planted barley, but could never have reaped it, as the weather is too warm for the grains to form. Instead, he should have spoken of Indian corn, which, like tobacco, is indigenous or native to the warm parts of America."

"But surely rice grows in warm climates!" exclaimed Mrs. Francis, forgetting she was judge, and joining in the discussion.

"It does, and produces an excellent crop if planted in the proper ground. Had Robinson been a real person, he would have told how he chose a marshy spot near his stream from which a ditch could have been dug to flood the rice at certain times. This would have given him an abundant harvest."

"I don't know what to think of Robinson," said Loys, gravely, "it seems as if he wanted to fool people."

"Oh, Loysie! Robinson tells plenty of true things. Now about his earthen pots and jugs — William says there is good clay for making them in Tobago; even the children there make toy dishes of it and build little ovens to bake them in. I wish we

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A Family of Carib Indians

would stop in Tobago long enough to do that, too. Do you think we can, Father?"

"I am afraid not, Halde. We will be there only a day."

"I wish we could stay longer," said Loys. "It is not fair to say things are not there unless we see for ourselves."

"You must remember we have been living in the same climate as that of Tobago, and therefore we can judge of the conditions on the island."

Loys thought awhile. "In that case the wet and dry seasons must have been there; and the earthquake as well."

"Yes, Defoe evidently took pains to make his island as real as possible. He does not put the seasons at exactly the right time; but as they are not always regular, that can pass. There is much that is good in the book; I do not know of any story more interesting or better thought out. Defoe sails his ship like a sailor, he mentions the rapid growth of trees, the Carib savages that live near and the currents that bring them, the great river Orinoco and the hazy land in the distance. All these, as I said before, he had heard or read about; but when he comes to tell of Robinson's daily life, that is, to see for himself, Defoe, except for a few remarks about the heat, forgets he is in the tropics and describes what might have taken place in his own country."

Loys looked almost convinced, but Halde remarked stubbornly, "A man all alone on a new island could not know everything."

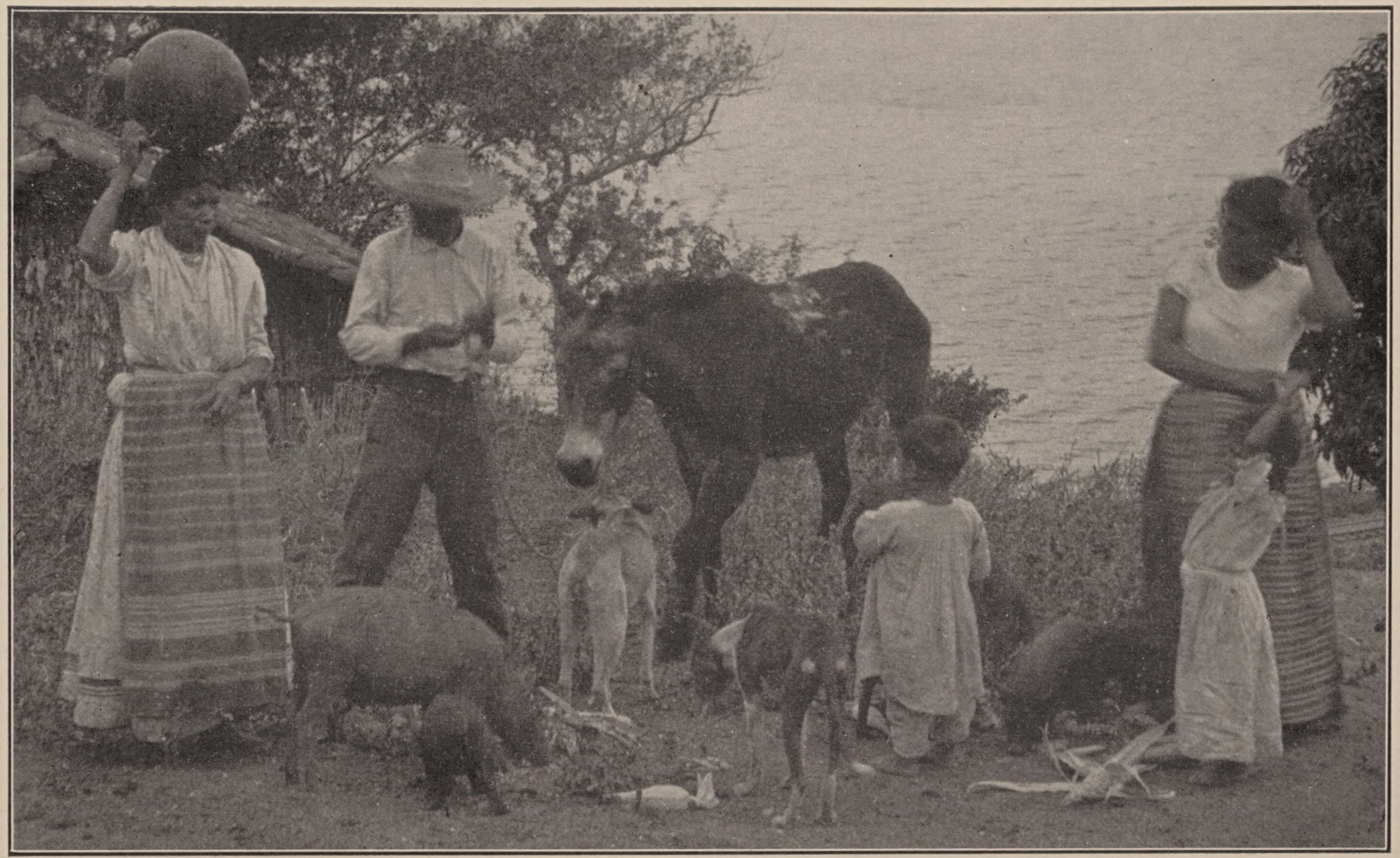
"Defoe places Robinson there twenty-eight years, so he had time to find out many things, and besides he might have learned a great deal from Friday: how to make ropes, hammocks, and cloth from the fibres of plants and of cotton; how to make bark sandals and palm-spathe hats, more suitable than those of goat-skin; or how to catch fish with nets plaited of reeds, or by poisoning them with macheneel, a tree the bark of which if thrown into the water will cause all the fish to rise to the surface where they can be easily caught by hundreds."

"William told me they do that now when they go picnicking in Tobago," remarked Loys.

"So I have heard. Fish caught in this way are perfectly healthy food; the Indians know of several plants which they use for the same purpose."

"Now, Father, you were talking of fresh meat spoiling in hot countries. What could Robinson do with such a quantity of fish?" objected Halde.

"Friday would know how to smoke and dry them upon a lattice of branches over the fire; or he might have prepared casareep, the boiled juice of the bitter cassava, which if poured over a pot of meat or fish will keep the food good for months. This, with the addition of peppers, makes a favorite Indian dish



A Family of Indians and their Pets

called pepper-pot. Casareep has a pleasant taste, and besides preserving the meat, makes it tender. Many white people are fond of it, and it would have been a great addition to Robinson's table."

"I think after all that Friday could have taught Robinson more than Robinson taught him," said Loys, thoughtfully.

"The Indians have many ways of taking fish besides poisoning," continued Mr. Francis. "A queer trap is formed of a piece of bark, some five feet long, rolled into a cylinder the size of a common stovepipe. One end is closed, and a small live fish is fastened to it in the inside. The trap is then hung by the middle to the branch of a tree and sunk about two feet under water. By and by, in goes a big fish to catch the bait. The weight of the fish tilts the trap as soon as the centre is passed, and the fish remains standing on its head until taken out.

"Indians also shoot fish with bows and arrows, and are so skillful in throwing a hook and line that they can make it touch any spot in the water they wish. As fish are plentiful in Tobago, Friday might have given his master a mess every morning."

"Where would he get hooks and lines, especially hooks? Robinson says in one place that he had none."

"He could make the line of fibre, the hooks of monkey bones."

"Are there monkeys in Tobago?"

"Certainly; the woods are full of little saka-winkies."

"Oh, Father! I am sorry Robinson did not know it. If he had only caught one like our Winkie, he never would have felt lonely with his parrot and a monkey for company."

CHAPTER XXXIII

INDIAN GAMES

"DO you believe, Father, that Indians are more intelligent than white people?" asked Loys, when they renewed the discussion next evening.

"What makes you think so, my boy?"

"Well, you said Friday could have made so many useful things that Robinson did not know about."

"That is because an Indian's education prepares him better to live in a wild country than does ours."

"Are Indians really educated?"

"What do you call an education, Loys?"

"Being taught something and learning it."

"Very good. Shall I tell you how Indian boys learn to shoot?"

"Do they go to school?" inquired Halde.

"Of course they do. Their school is a slanting piece of ground, not too far from the village. Here, on fine days, the women, the girls, and the boys of the tribe meet, the former carrying green calabashes, the latter their bows and arrows. A lively scene follows. The young hunters stand at a short distance

from the bottom of the hill, while the women and girls go to the top. Then one of the girls stoops and starts a calabash whirling down the slope.

"Off it goes, bouncing over stones, curving around some roughness in the way; now hidden by a tuft of grass, then out again, rolling sideways, zigzag, straight, slow or fast — no one can count on its next motion.

"Watchful and eager, the boys make ready. Bows are bent, arrows are aimed, every eye is directed towards the moving target. A few of the younger boys, too excited to wait, let fly while the ball is yet out of range. An arrow sent by a strong arm goes beyond the mark, another has been aimed too low, and still another is about to strike, when the prey, leaping suddenly, escapes. Now they come in volleys. The air is full of whizzing and rushing arrows. One almost pities the poor calabash; pricked and pierced on all sides, it moves slower, and at last stops.

"The children shout; more calabashes, sometimes several together, are set off, and the lesson continues. Though it is so simple, I have never seen a better training for the end in view; strength, skill, and judgment are all exercised."

"Let us try it to-morrow," cried Loys. "Do, Father; you have bows and arrows in the gallery and there is a calabash tree in the garden."

A Carib Hut in the Mountains

"Please, Father," begged Halde.

"We have no hill."

"A board set against the fence will do, and William can roll the calabashes for us," suggested Loys.

"Very well, then. You can also get William to nail strips on each side of the board so that the calabashes will not fall off."

The boys shouted like little Indians and ran to consult William about a proper board and the place to put it. No more was seen of them that evening, but towards bedtime they came back for a bit, without which nothing can be done in the colony. This time it was for nails.

By the time the boys were dressed in the morning, William had made a kind of wooden trough. On leaning this against the fence, higher or lower, you could regulate the speed of the calabash; though at first whether it rolled fast or slowly the children could not hit it. In fact, the bows and arrows from the gallery were too large for them. Later they attempted to make some for themselves. This also was a failure: the bows snapped and the arrows did not go straight.

"You see, boys," said Mr. Francis, "we know nothing, even speaking and walking, without learning it. Indians of your age make bows and arrows and are good marksmen, because they have lived where they could see these things well done and have copied what they saw."

"Do you think if we went to the interior we could learn to shoot well?" asked Loys.

"No doubt; but what is useful for an Indian boy to learn would be a waste of time for you. However, I will buy some small bows and arrows for you and Halde to play with, and meanwhile you may try the blowpipe hanging in the gallery."

The children ran off and soon returned carrying the blowpipe between them. This singular Indian weapon is formed of two tubes, about eight feet long, placed one within the other. The inside tube is a reed the smooth surface of which allows the arrows to pass through it freely; the outside covering serves to protect the reed, and is made from the stalk of a small palm, the pith of which is taken out after soaking it in water. The darts used are the tough and heavy midribs of the coucourite-palm leaf, and have silk-cotton wrapped around one end to make them fit tightly in the blowpipe. Although no larger than a steel knitting-needle, these darts are more dangerous than a bullet; for their points are smeared with wourali, a deadly poison.

Loys had the first trial. He stuffed a dart into the breach and lifted the blowpipe to his mouth, but found it was too heavy for him to hold out straight. Halde then stationed himself at the far end and rested the pipe on his shoulder. This done, Loys, gathering all the wind his fat cheeks were able to hold,

gave a puff which sent the dart flying. William, busy watching the boys, forgot to let off the calabash. However, this did not matter, as the marksman had been too much engaged with blowing to take aim.

It was now Halde's turn. Mr. Francis pointed out to him the sight — a long white tooth of an agouti fastened with a kind of black gum near the end of the blowpipe — and told him to raise or lower the gun until this was on a level with the spot he wished to hit.

Loys stood waiting to help hold the pipe and William was warned to be in readiness, when Halde, suddenly looking up, exclaimed, "But, Father, I don't know where the calabash will be!"

"True," laughed Mr. Francis, "I forgot that the blowpipe is generally used for what our sportsmen call pot-hunting. The Indian steals quietly under a tree where birds are feeding, and as his arrows make no noise, he can hit any number without the others taking alarm. I will hang my hat on this branch for you to aim at, and we will keep the calabashes for when you have your bows and arrows."

At this moment Mrs. Francis came hurrying into the garden and called to her husband, "Is it possible you have given the children those poisoned darts to play with!"

"Certainly not! How could you think I would

be so imprudent? These are a few I had without poison. But, boys, it is getting hot, we must go in."

"I have not had my shot," cried out Halde, dissatisfied.

"Well, puff away! I can't do without my hat any longer."

Had Halde's strength been equal to his effort, the dart would have gone through the hat. As this was not the case, it fell short of the mark, much to his disappointment.

"Now run into the house," said Mr. Francis, taking his hat. "Come, come!"

"We will never learn to shoot without practice," began Loys, as they went upstairs.

"I cannot let you stay in the sun."

"If we make a target, may we shoot in the house?"

"That is a good idea. Ask your mother to sew a round cushion of cloth for you. You can then stuff it with hay and paint the lines upon it."

This work occupied the boys until breakfast, after which they had a long trial with the blowpipe. Loys finally succeeded in hitting the bull's-eye.

"You must increase the distance little by little," advised Mr. Francis, who had been called to see the dart still sticking in the target. "I have read that an Indian will send a dart three hundred feet, but it will be some time before a puff from either of your little mouths will do that."

INDIANS, WITH DART, AND BOW AND ARROW

Mr. Francis then called the boys' attention to how the silk-cotton was wound spirally around the end of the dart to give it a circular motion when leaving the reed.

"And what is that for?" asked Loys.

"The twist makes the dart go straight, the same as a bullet shot from the grooved barrel of a gun. It is wonderful that the Indians should have discovered this device long before they had the opportunity to examine the rifles of the white men."

"Do any of the Indians have guns?" was Loys's next question.

"Some of them buy guns from the white traders, and are very proud when they can own one. I must tell you of how several Indians made use of their guns to play a clever joke on a friend of mine.

"He had a repeating rifle that could shoot ten times without reloading, and which was greatly admired by the Indians whenever he went to the interior. One day, as he was being rowed along the river, he heard six shots fired in rapid succession. Knowing that his was the only repeating rifle in the forest, he thought that a white traveler had arrived and ordered his crew to paddle ashore. The place was deserted, but later he learned that six Indians, each with a gun, had arranged to fire them off one after the other in order to fool him."

Halde laughed. "What do Indian boys learn at school, besides shooting?"

"Music," answered his father. "The Warraus have a band-master who is called *ho-ho-hit*. Their instruments are flutes and pipes of reeds or bamboo with holes burned into them. These differ in size, from a few inches to five feet in length, and give a great variety of sounds. The band-master sits surrounded by his pupils, whom he directs with waving hands and nodding head, and by the sound of a small whistle. Other tribes make flutes out of the thigh-bone of the jaguar, like the one hanging in our gallery. Drums also are used, and bracelets and anklets of seeds that rattle as the musicians beat or stamp the time, which is generally in waltz measure."

"It is a pity Robinson did not get Friday to make a flute for him," remarked Halde. "He could have passed many jolly evenings playing hornpipes."

"What else do Indian boys learn?" inquired Loys.

"They make boats from the spathe of a large palm, such as James once made for you, only bigger. The little canoes will each carry a single boy who paddles with his hands."

"I would like one to take home with us," declared Halde. "Loys and I could paddle in the creek behind Bywater."

"Unfortunately, your canoe would dry and crack

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INDIAN CHILDREN

The Little Girl in the Foreground carries her Little Brother on her Back, held fast in her Blanket

before we got there. The Indian boys also play ball, and made India-rubber balls long before the white people thought of doing so, because the tree grows here."

"Any one can make balls," said Loys. "What else do they do?"

"Indian boys wrestle, run races, dance, and go hunting with the older men of the tribe. Their parents are kind to them, and their life is not hard. But on the whole, I think you may be satisfied not to be one of them."

"I would like to be an Indian boy, just the same," insisted Halde.

"At least you can take the blowpipe and some bows and arrows to Bywater when we return."

"We can hit quite well with the blowpipe now," remarked Loys, "and William says that perhaps we can get some little bows and arrows from the Indians."

"That reminds me, I believe there are some Indians in town. Would you like to go and see them this evening?"

"Yes, indeed, Father!"

"Then, it is possible that one may be kind enough to keep Halde, as he wishes to be an Indian."

Halde said nothing, but that evening when Mr. Francis and Loys were ready to start, he was nowhere to be found. It was only when they came home,

bringing some small bows with a bundle of arrows, that he appeared from his hiding-place in the tower. Nothing more was said about being an Indian; but every morning the boys practised in the garden with their bows until they became skillful marksmen and could even hit a calabash when William rolled it along the walk.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND

THE day for the departure home finally arrived. No one in the house could help feeling excited and worried towards the last moment. There were so many trifles to think of. Each member of the family, besides his usual baggage, had something he especially wished to carry along. The boys had their blowpipe and bows and arrows, as well as a parrot in a cage for Auntie; Mr. Francis took with him a collection of orchids, one of bird skins, and a number of Indian curiosities; while Mother packed several boxes of oranges, limes, cocoanuts, sugar-cane, and pineapples for kind friends in the States, and jars of guava and tamarind jelly for Grandmother.

Snap, alas! was the only pet that accompanied them. Joe, the puma, had been given to a zoo in New York; Darling had been sold to the father of one of the children's friends, and Billy the toucan, Hanna, and the troupial were sent out in the country to Dr. Davis.

It was evening when the family went on board the *Barracouta*. Loys and Halde were delighted with the large clean vessel, and took great pleasure in looking at it from end to end, inside and out, downstairs and up. Mr. Francis quickly got everything into the staterooms, and Mother put them in order. Their cabins were on deck, and just outside stood two easy-chairs they had brought for the journey. An awning covered this part of the steamer, making it shady throughout the day, and with books, toys, buns, and cakes, a more cosy spot could not be found.

Presently the steam began to whisper through the pipes and escape in cloudy flakes from the vessel's sides. The grimy stokers, who had been taking a breath of air on deck, went below, and the sounds of the engine became louder. Mr. Francis said, "Listen, boys, the engine is doing its packing up for the voyage." Then the whistle shrieked as if to call "ready!" and a small cannon forward boomed out, "Passengers, hurry on board, we are about to weigh anchor."

Night had come as they moved slowly down the river, the twinkling windows on shore grew dim, while the stars brightened. Slipping on with the tide, the *Barracouta* soon reached the sea. At intervals flashes fell like spears from the revolving lamp in the lighthouse tower. Still a little farther, they

were met by what seemed to be a great red sun shining from the opposite direction. This was the lightship, where the steamer stopped to put off the pilot.

The boys remained on deck until four bells. "Tobago in the morning," were their father's last words when they crept into their berths.

The morning came, but in spite of a quiet sea, all except Mr. Francis felt too ill to rise.

"Something makes my stomach crawl!" exclaimed Halde, sadly.

"Oh, Father, I don't feel as if I could ever get up again!" groaned Loys.

"There is one good thing about seasickness," added Mr. Francis, cheerfully; "it leaves as quickly as it comes."

This was found to be the case. No sooner did the *Barracouta* begin to slacken speed and the green hills of Tobago peep through the cabin windows than the boys sat up; and in a little time the rattling of chains, the pulling of ropes, and the noise of something unusual going on made them so curious that they dressed and went on deck. Mother followed, though more slowly.

A beautiful sight met their eyes. The steamer lay anchored in a land-locked bay. Hills rose from three sides, leaving a channel on the fourth through which the blue sea came tumbling in to break and foam on the circling beach.

Every object on shore was repeated in the hurrying water. Houses, trees, and hills joined in an everlasting frolic with the baby waves, doubling themselves up, wrinkling their rough sides, now stretching out long and slim, then as suddenly growing round and fat, plunging under the water and appearing again — a fairy-land inhabited by fishes.

"Each owner has two houses," remarked Mr. Francis, pointing out this odd effect, "one on shore and one in the sea."

"I like best the one in the water, it seems so cool and jolly, rolling about," said Halde.

"And we would need no cradles, or rocking-chairs, or bath-tubs," added Loys.

"Oh, Father!" exclaimed Halde, "do look at those funny birds stealing fish as the men draw in their nets."

"They are pelicans. In a minute they put enough fish in that pouch under their bill to last them a day."

"I don't think Robinson should have felt sorry to be wrecked on such a lovely island as this," continued Halde, "only it isn't as small as I thought."

"Captain, how large is Tobago?" asked Mr. Francis, as this officer approached.

"Twenty-seven miles long and twelve miles broad. If you care to go on shore, the boat is now ready." The boys brought their hats in a hurry, but their mother declared she felt too weak to go along.

"Oh, Mother, you must come!" pleaded both. "Suppose you never had the chance of seeing Robinson Crusoe's island again."

Finally, after a cup of tea, Mrs. Francis was persuaded to put on her bonnet, and they all entered the boat together. As they drew near shore they rowed by a noisy crowd of black boys, playing in the sea like young porpoises. The pelicans did not seem in the least afraid of the youngsters, neither were the fish, for the water was filled with shining, scaled "jacks," a fish resembling the herring. It was these that attracted the pelicans, who, in spite of their awkward movements, managed to avoid the blows and kicks aimed at them; and flying, swimming, wading, or walking, collected toll from every net that passed.

"Now, boys, we can see what improvement Tobago has made since Robinson Crusoe was here," said Mr. Francis, as they landed at a wooden wharf. "Take care, or you will fall through the holes. I believe if Crusoe were governor at present he would have the place repaired."

"Father, it seems to me as if Robinson really had been here," remarked Loys, as he skipped along by his father's side.

"I always said he was true," began Halde. "Just look what a real island this is, and why shouldn't Robinson be real, too?"

"Yes, and why shouldn't he come down that hilly street, in his goat-skin suit, pointed hat, and umbrella, to welcome us?" added Mr. Francis.

"Because he is dead," replied Halde, sadly. "You know he was very old when the book ended."

"If it pleases you, we will suppose him to be real while we are here," went on Mr. Francis. "The island lies east and west, so he might have landed and climbed the cliffs there to the right. That high hill, just above, with the fort upon it, is where he so often stood, shading his eyes with his hand, to look out for a sail."

"His cave must be in the same hill; William said it is about three miles from town," remarked Loys.

"Let us walk that way. You remember the cave was on the northwest side of the hill."

They mounted through the steep little town of Scarborough. There was not a level street in the place. Each house overlooked its neighbor, and all seemed as if a good rainfall would send them sliding off their foundations into the sea. To reach the fort they were obliged to descend into a valley, at the bottom of which ran a stream that was crossed on stepping-stones.

"This must be the creek where Robinson brought his raft from the ship!" exclaimed Halde, excitedly.

"And that Friday swam across when the savages ran after him," said Loys.

"There is not enough water in it," objected their mother.

"Because just now is the dry season," explained Mr. Francis. "From the way the river-bed is worn, it must be a considerable stream after the rains begin."

They now took a zigzag path up the other side of the valley. The negroes had built small huts on every possible spot, and goats, fowls, dogs, and children swarmed among the rocks. It seemed to be the quarter for washerwomen; so many were busy rubbing out clothes.

"I wonder if Robinson came down here to wash his shirts," said Halde, as he saw the women at work.

"He never says anything about washing, but I suppose he could; sailors do their own washing, you know," returned Loys.

"He never speaks of bathing, either, though the blue sea looks very tempting," remarked Mrs. Francis.

"But of course he did," said Loys. "No one could see those lovely waves rolling in without wanting to bathe."

While speaking they came to a church halfway up the hill. Its door was open and the shady seats within made a welcome resting-place. From the windows they had a beautiful view of the bay and of the neighboring hills covered with waving fields of sugar-cane and forests of fine timber.

"Some of those trees are old enough to have been here in Robinson's time," remarked Mr. Francis. "Do you remember in what way he made his boards?"

"He chopped away both sides of a tree until the board was left in the middle," answered Loys.

"Don't you think he might have followed a better plan?"

"He should have taken the tree to a sawmill!" shouted Halde.

"Nonsense, Halde! Do you mean, Father, that he could have built a sawmill?"

"No, what I mean is a much simpler way, — with wedges. They are among the first tools of the savage, and a clever man like Robinson ought certainly to have thought of them."

"Robinson was clever enough; if only Defoe had known more," remarked Halde, sagely. "And besides, Father, it isn't polite to talk against Robinson on his own island."

"I have seen trees that would have given him boards ready-made. It is a common practice in the tropics to cut a circle through the bark of the cabbage-palm, which of course kills the tree. The inside then soon rots away, leaving the strong outer wood that splits easily into boards of any width desired."

"And over there are dishes growing, ready to be picked," said Mrs. Francis, pointing to a tree from

which hung on long stems round green fruit the size of cannon-balls.

"Calabashes!" exclaimed Loys. "William made some bowls for us to use in our coolie house. He cut the calabashes in half, by twisting a string tightly around them with a piece of wood. Then he took the pulp out and scraped the inside of the bowl with broken glass."

"If you sew a piece of cloth around the young calabash, you can make it grow almost any shape you wish," observed Mr. Francis; "so Robinson could have grown bottles as well. Now, let us go to the fort, where we will have a good view on all sides."

It was a hot climb; but they finally reached the top and seated themselves in the shade of a wall. The children were soon busy recalling every incident of Robinson's life, feeling that they were upon the very ground that he had trodden.

Loys took the field-glass that Mr. Francis had brought, and stood with it raised to his eyes as he had seen Robinson do in a picture. "Father, which is the east?"

Mr. Francis pointed out the direction.

"That is where Crusoe tried to go around in his boat," continued Loys; "and see! the water dashes upon the rocks, just as he said it did. No wonder the Spanish ship was wrecked there."

"Those are coral reefs and very dangerous,"

remarked Mr. Francis. "They extend at least three miles from land."

"It is my turn to look," said Halde, taking the glass from his brother. "I want to find something, too."

"Look towards the centre of the island where Robinson had his grain fields, and farther westward, where stood his bower and goat-farm," suggested Mrs. Francis. She then pointed to the far side of the bay and asked the boys if they knew what had happened there.

"That's where the savages brought Friday on shore when he ran away," answered Loys, promptly.

"I wish we could go to the other end of the island and see where the cannibals ate so many prisoners."

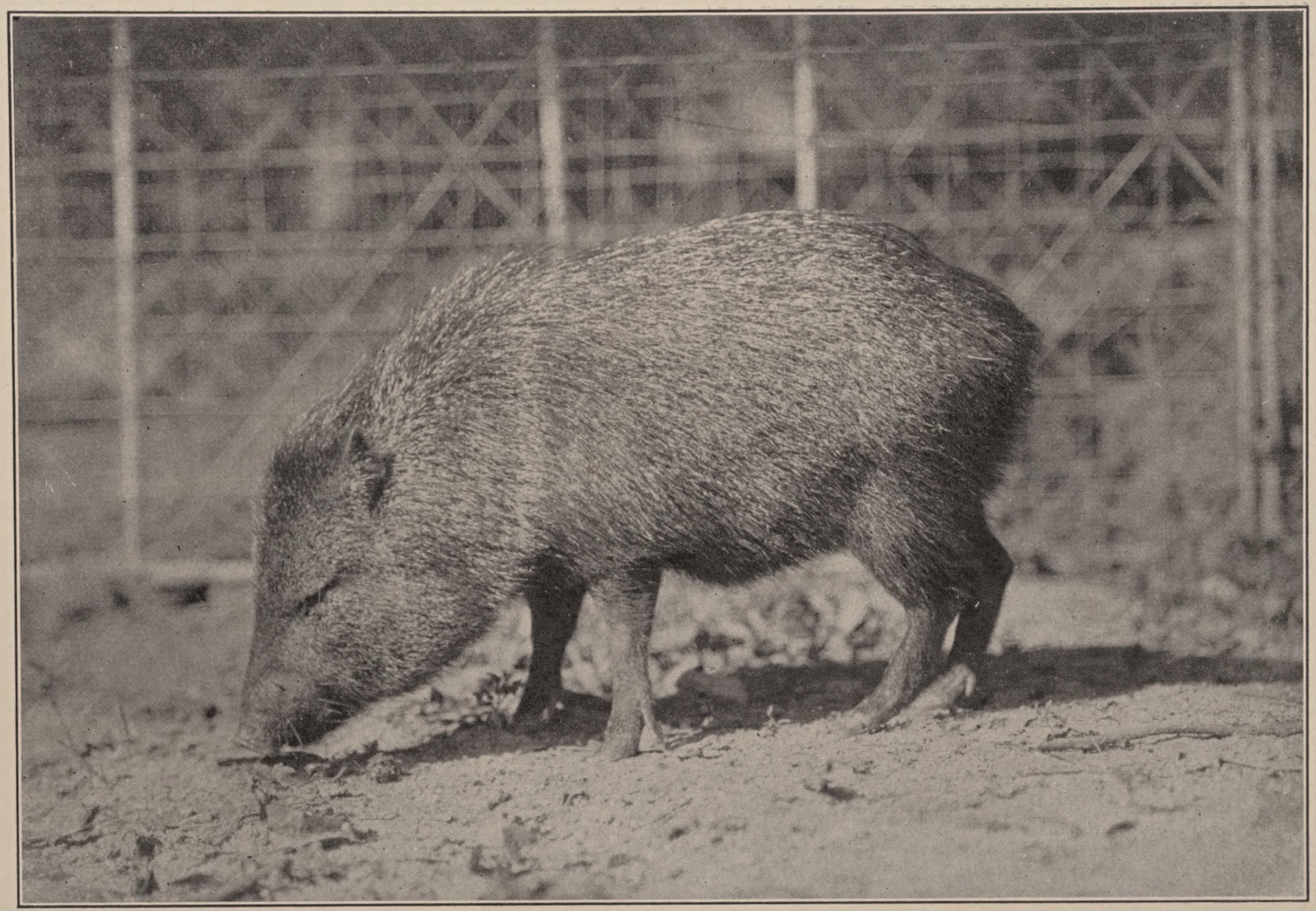
"That is cruel, Halde!" exclaimed Loys. "I would not want to look at it; would you, Mother?"

"And the place he found the print of a man's foot in the sand. I always felt so frightened when we read that," went on Halde, without waiting for his mother to answer. "If we had time, I would like to drive all over the island."

"Very little driving is done here, the roads are too hilly. People generally ride the native horses."

"If Robinson had only caught one," began Halde; but Loys stopped him by saying, "Horses were not native *then*."

They returned to town by an easier way, where a stone bridge crossed the ravine. Again they passed



A Peccary, or Wild Pig

through streets humped like a camel's back, ending in steep country roads shaded by cedar, mahogany, and cocoanut trees. When halfway down, a slight drizzle caused them to take shelter in the hut of a shoemaker. Here the boys asked numberless questions, which were kindly answered by a white-headed old negro who owned the shop, and this is what they learned: —

The woods of Tobago abound in peccaries or wild hogs, monkeys, and snakes; yawarris, an animal like our opossum; labbas and agoutis, little creatures resembling hares; water-hogs, a beast having webbed feet, a thick awkward body, a big head, and four tusks; and iguanas and lizards.

Flocks of pigeons, parrots, vultures, doves, pheasants, and little wrens fly about the island, while different kinds of gulls and sea-fowl, of which the great man-of-war bird measuring seven feet across the wings is the largest, make the shores lively.

There are also rapid streams filled with fish, alligators, wading cranes, and wild ducks. Flying-fish and other fishes are plentiful in the sea, and turtles with eggs can be caught at certain seasons on the white sandy beaches.

The children had heard much of this at home, but the facts seemed far more real and interesting when told on the island. Their host, quite proud of such attentive listeners, was just beginning a wonderful

pirate story, when the rain ceased and Mr. Francis said it was time to return to the ship.

"Do, Father, let us hear the pirate story!"

"I am very sorry, but the captain told me not to remain away too long."

Just before leaving, Loys thought of one more question, "Do grapes grow in Tobago?"

"Plenty of dem. Dey is called sea-bay grapes, because de trees always grow near de sea. If you walk 'round chock over dere, you will meet a row of dem not too far from de wharf."

Loys nodded his head, as if to say, "You see Robinson was right," and forgot the pirates in his haste to "meet" the grapes.

A steep climb down a stony path brought the family to the beach. Here market-women were selling "jacks," but no grapes. Loys asked a little black boy to point out the grape trees, which was willingly done.

The children, who had expected to see grape-vines, were greatly surprised to find a row of wild trees about the size of those in an apple orchard. The limbs began low, near the ground, and spread apart as if afraid of touching each other. Thick, broad, leathery leaves circled closely around short stems, from the end of which hung, or rather stood out, bunches of grapes — hundreds of bunches on each tree!

But surprise soon gave way to a desire of tasting this wonder, and a very short time was needed for the boys to reach the topmost branches, where, between eating, filling their pockets, and throwing fruit down to their parents, they spent a jolly half-hour.

These grapes are a reddish purple, with skin and pulp like the ordinary fruit, and have a single stone the size of a pea. Nothing could resemble less the graceful vine than these sturdy trees, so firmly put together that a stiff gale is necessary to move their branches. However, the fruit has a pleasant taste, and a tired, ship-wrecked sailor need wish no better luck than to come across a sea-bay grape tree in full bearing.

CHAPTER XXXV

TRINIDAD

THEIR feast ended, the family went on board. When comfortably seated in his steamer-chair, Loys, taking some grapes from his pocket, said, "Father, these are native here, are they not?"

"Certainly. They grow in most of the West India Islands and in British Guiana, also."

"And you blamed Robinson for saying he found them on his island," added Halde, reproachfully.

"But did not Robinson mention that his grapes grew on *vines?*"

"That was only because he thought people would laugh at him if he said that he saw grapes growing on trees."

"And his penguins were pelicans, I suppose?" continued Mr. Francis, pointing to these droll birds, still busy with the fishermen.

"Why not? They both begin with a *p*, and you know Robinson's ink gave out soon after he went to the island; so that he had to write everything long after it happened and sometimes got a little mixed."

"I will say no more, boys. The Romans claimed Romulus and Remus, and the Swiss, William Tell. Almost every country has some great hero or founder of whom the people love to speak; so why should not Tobago have her Robinson Crusoe? He is just as worthy to become a part of history as the others; indeed, few heroes had his practical wisdom and sense of justice."

Little, round, heavy-looking craft, called Moses boats, came alongside the steamer, each laden with a hogshead of sugar. The donkey-engine puffed away, and the noisy steam winch hurried its utmost to take in the cargo. Once more the anchor was raised, and the cannon fired its good-by to the silent fort, which the hills answered one by one. The *Barracouta* steamed out of the bay, first towards the east, then westward, on a direct course for Trinidad.

Next morning, on awakening, the family found themselves in the Gulf of Paria, about a mile from Port of Spain, the capital of the island. Though part of their course during the night had been against the current, no one suffered from seasickness; and when Mr. Francis appeared at the stateroom door and asked, "Who wants to go on shore?" "I," was distinctly heard three times in answer.

"Then dress quickly; the sooner we start, the better."

The boys scrambled out, and shortly after six o'clock the family set off in the captain's boat.

"While we are rowing to town I must tell you of a man who really lived, and whose name is connected with many of the West India Islands."

"Christopher Columbus!" interrupted Loys. "Mother gave me a book about him before we left Georgetown. He visited and named Trinidad on his third voyage."

"Columbus came into the gulf through what he called the Serpent's Mouth, the opening at the south-west end of the island. From the strong current and the freshness of the water he concluded that it was the outlet of some great river having its rise on the mainland. Taste the water of the bay; it comes from the Orinoco."

The boys took up some of the water in their hands and found it scarcely salt. By this time the rowers' strong arms had brought the boat to the wharf. The family landed and walked towards the centre of the town. It was not a pretty place, and was very hot. Disgusting vultures wandered about like tame dogs, giving one the idea that the people must be either careless or lazy to need the help of these carrion birds in order to keep their streets clean.

But the beauty of Trinidad lies outside the town. After ordering a lunch at the hotel to be ready on their return, the family started for a drive. Their first halt

was at the botanical gardens, where a delightful hour was spent wandering through shady lanes bordered by tropical plants.

On their way out they passed a grove of bamboos, and Mr. Francis asked the boys if they remembered the story of Gulliver and the Lilliputians. "Here is something more wonderful," he added. "This short grass covering the ground and the tall bamboos forty feet high are of the same family."

The carriage was waiting near by, and when all were seated, they continued their drive along a pleasant road running through a valley to the east of the town. Here nature had made a garden far more beautiful than the one they had left. In the foreground, fields of sugar-cane waved their fluffy plumes, or a plantation of cocoa could be seen taking shelter from the heat under higher trees, the red and brown bean-pods studding the bark of the trunks and stems, as if nailed there. On the hills beyond rose a mass of dense foliage, where huge ferns and palms of various forms made a network against the pale blue sky.

As they drove on, the valley narrowed, the woods around them grew heavier and the shadows deepened, though sometimes a patch of sunlight drifted into the valley as if to cool off. Overhead hung vines in festoons from limb to limb, and near by a stream full of eager rapids hurried on, giving life to numberless soft mosses and creeping ferns.

"It seems as if a fairy palace ought to be at the end of such a road!" exclaimed Mrs. Francis.

"You will see something more practical," replied her husband. "If we get out here, a few minutes' walk will bring us to the city reservoir."

Finding their way through a narrow path, they came to the reservoir — three large cut-stone basins placed one above the other and filled with water, so clear that its surface looked like bits of fallen sky, with white clouds gently moving over it. Not a creature was to be seen, not a sound to be heard, except the flow of the water from basin to basin.

"Is it enchanted?" asked Mother, smiling.

"There is no palace," said Halde, "but there is a summer-house."

Mr. and Mrs. Francis rested on a rustic bench while the boys ran about. Presently a flock of parrots flew out of the woods and stopped at the upper pool to drink.

"I wish I was a parrot," whispered Loys to his brother.

"I'd much rather be a monkey," answered Halde.

"A parrot can talk."

"But a monkey can climb."

"Parrots climb also, and can fly as well."

"A monkey can hang by his tail and swing."

"Oh, boys, do stop that foolish dispute!" called their mother from the summer-house.

"I wish I was a monkey with wings," added Halde.

"Even if they had wings, monkeys can't whistle," returned Loys, and as this was an accomplishment Halde had been unable to master, the dispute was not carried any farther.

By this time the red sun glaring from the middle basin warned the family that noon had come, and they started back to town. On their arrival at the hotel, they soon despatched the excellent lunch that was awaiting them, after which they went on board.

Mr. Francis told the boys of a singular lake in the island, over which people and horses can walk.

"When it is frozen?" asked Loys.

Mr. Francis laughed. "How could that be in the tropics? The lake I am speaking of is of pitch. It is from this pitch lake that comes the asphaltum with which we cover our streets in the States. Whatever amount is taken out, the oozing mass slowly fills up the hole again, so that the supply is never exhausted. I am sorry we cannot go there, but it is twenty-five miles from town, and we start this evening for Grenada."

The captain, who was pacing the deck, stopped for a little chat. "You must be sure to come forward at about nine o'clock and see us pass through the Bocca," he said to the boys.

"What is the Bocca?" inquired both.

"Bocca is the Spanish name for mouth; if no-

thing happens to prevent, we shall pass through the Dragon's Mouth to-night."

"A dragon's mouth!" repeated Halde.

"Yes, and a dangerous place it is, many a ship has been lost there."

After dinner the family sat on deck, as the vessel rushed swifty northward over a smooth sea that appeared silver under the bright tropical moon.

"You had better go to bed, my dear boy," said Mrs. Francis, seeing that Halde's head dropped lower and lower every minute.

"No, I am waiting for the Focus."

"Bocca," corrected Loys.

"Yes, Focus," repeated Halde, wearily, and in another moment he was fast asleep. But when later the captain sent for them to come, Loys begged hard that his brother might go also, and finding it impossible to wake him, he carried Halde forward and seated him on the capstan.

The great current of the Orinoco swept the vessel rapidly towards a narrow gap in the low hills which separates Trinidad from South America. This sluicelike opening is the Dragon's Mouth, one of the Boccas, of which there are three, each with a different name. The water hissed along the rocks on both sides of the channel. The shores were so near that you could see the leaves on the trees, and you felt that a very slight mistake in steering would

wreck the vessel. The captain stood on the bridge, and the steersman was directly below him. It was wonderful how at a word from the one and a movement from the other the great mass of one thousand six hundred tons obeyed; now heading here, now there, as it threaded the difficult pass.

When about halfway through the channel Loys succeeded in making Halde open his eyes. "Do you see the Bocca—do you see the land—how near it is?"

Halde stared about him and replied in a sleepy tone, "I see, but where is the dragon?"

Mr. Francis lifted him up, saying: "Look your last at South America. See on the left that dim strip of coast; it was that part of the continent Amerigo Vespucius claimed to have traveled over a year before Columbus touched the mainland, and thus Amerigo gave his name to the new world as its discoverer."

A little longer, and they had passed the Bocca, into the Caribbean Sea. Halde was again fast asleep on his father's shoulder; his last impression of South America being a dream of rushing water, of strong-winged sea-birds frightened from their rocks and circling over the vessel, of low green hills and pale mountains, and a fierce dragon in hiding somewhere, guarding the Bocca.

CHAPTER XXXVI

GRENADA AND BARBADOES

EVERY day a new island. Next morning the *Barracouta* lay in the harbor of St. George, Grenada; so near shore that a hawser fastened the vessel to the wharf. This is the spice island of the West Indies. Some sugar is grown there, as well as cocoa and coffee; but most of the land is planted in nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, pimento, and pepper.

The little bay is so surrounded by land that its entrance can scarcely be seen, and so hot that it seemed as if you had been set down into a tub of warm water — a good-sized tub, however, and a very deep one. The steep slopes that rose on all sides were here and there dotted with tiny white houses; and an old fort stood as a reminder of the days when pirates and sea-fights occurred in these waters.

"Grenada is an ideal island," said Mr. Francis, as the boys came on deck for their first look at the place. "It has fine forests and a rich cultivation.

The people are industrious and sensible. Several years ago, when sugar ceased paying a profit, they planted spices which have done remarkably well."

"Let us go on shore and have a drive, like yesterday," proposed Loys.

"Willingly, if we can find a carriage in this small town."

Halde suggested climbing to shore on one of the hawsers, as shipwrecked sailors do; but Mother thought a boat would be more convenient.

In a few minutes they were rowed to the wharf, and were inquiring after a carriage for hire. The town could boast of two: one belonging to a grocer on the square, the other to a butcher living farther away. The square proved to be the roundest square ever called by that name, being nothing more or less than the crater of a volcano. Of course the fire was out, but the ground seemed hot enough to begin bubbling up at any moment. To get there you first mounted a street lined with houses. This brought you to the rim of the cup from where you followed another slippery street to the bottom.

Here the family found a busy market with venders strolling about or sitting under umbrellas selling their wares. Surrounding the square were a number of shops, in one of which Mrs. Francis took a seat on a packing-box while her husband went to hunt for the carriage.

When Mr. Francis returned, it was only to say that the grocer's carriage was out.

"I wish we were also out," sighed Mrs. Francis, gasping for air.

"Come, then, take my arm. The butcher lives on the street by the bay."

Loys and Halde capered along like young goats, while their parents followed slowly after them. "If we had a good big palm spathe," shouted Halde, "Mother might sit on it. We could then pull her up, and all coast down the other side together."

"Don't you think a little snow would be an advantage?" asked his father.

"Oh, splendid! Isn't it a pity that the boys in this town have such nice hills for coasting, and no snow?"

"It is not quite so bad as having an appetite and no dinner," answered Mr. Francis; but by this time Halde was out of hearing.

When they returned to the bay, the children stopped every moment to watch the crabs, shells, and coral to be seen in the clear water.

"Father, may we paddle barefooted close to the shore?" said Loys, kneeling to poke a queer-looking sea thing that crumpled itself up and hid in the wall by the roadside.

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Francis. "Come away, you will fall into the water; it is very deep."

The boys obeyed, only to return when a crab more lively than usual or a larger piece of coral met their eyes; so that Mrs. Francis was glad when they arrived at the butcher's. However, the wished-for carriage could not be hired, as the man said his horse could not pull so many passengers. In vain Mr. Francis promised to walk the horse, to get out at the hills, and to make many stops; the butcher remained obstinate, and the family had to give up the idea of visiting the spice plantations of the island.

Mrs. Francis consoled herself by buying a quantity of nutmegs at sixteen cents the hundred, but the boys still wished to ramble about. "Do let us walk around the bay. I see a beautiful road," said Loys.

"Those roads are only to look at, not for use," replied his mother, seriously.

"Is Mother joking?" asked Halde.

"Not at all. For people who get headaches and fevers such roads are not for use — at least without a carriage. Say good-by to Grenada, and come quickly on board."

Fortunately there was little sugar to load and the *Barracouta* left early in the afternoon. This gave the family a chance to see the winding course of the bay with its two rocks at the entrance, worn and pierced by the action of water.

"What a nice place for pirates to hide, in the days gone by," said Loys.

"And to be caught in," added his mother. "If I had been a pirate, I would rather try my luck in the open sea."

Outside the bay the long line of Grenadines began to appear in the distance, gradually changing from palest gray to darkest green as the vessel approached; then fading again, as they were left behind, while others took their places.

"Grenadines means little seeds, a good name for a group of small islands," explained Mr. Francis to the boys.

"Perhaps the person who named them thought they would grow to be big countries," remarked Halde.

"Imagine the feelings of Columbus when, one after the other, these islands came into view," said Mrs. Francis.

"And he saw with his eyes what had been in his mind for years," added Loys, thoughtfully.

"It must indeed have been glorious!" Mrs. Francis continued. "And though Columbus had many troubles, few people have had greater reason to be satisfied with their lives."

"I like Columbus very much, and am very glad *he* is true," said Halde, earnestly.

As the sun went down, the sea became rough. The family went early to bed and gladly remained there until the steamer stopped at Barbadoes. Carlisle

Bay, as the harbor is called, has the shape of a half circle open towards the sea. Its light green water is so clear that any object can be seen on the bottom thirty feet below. To the right stands a fort, and to the left Pelican Island, a bit of coral reef with a small quarantine station upon it.

The harbor was filled with vessels; some lately arrived, with all their colors flying, and one or two under full sail, still tacking about to make good their entrance. Several English men-of-war and a German training ship were lying idly at anchor, while sloops, schooners, brigs, and a large mail steamer were busily taking in cargo. The "chanties" or songs of the watermen, the shouts of the sailors, the rattling of chains and cables, the striking of watch-bells, and the chug-chug of donkey-engines mingled with the sounds from the shore.

A number of boats of all sizes and colors crowded around the vessel. The *Lily*, the *Star*, the *Lazy*, were some of the names shouted out by their darkey owners:—

"Want a boat? Want a boat? Take me, me first here. Me the *Star*."

"Me the *Lily*, good boat. Ask for the *Lily*, first here."

The boys waited impatiently for the doctor and harbor-master to arrive. They had heard of beautiful drives, of fine surf-bathing in the green water at

Hastings, and of a hotel where they might breakfast on flying-fish and other good things. Finally the officers came, and the captain's boat took the family to shore.

"I am glad we are able to see this island," said Mr. Francis, on landing. "It was the earliest settled of the English West Indies. You remember Robinson Crusoe steered for Barbadoes after his first storm."

"Oh, yes, Father!" answered the boys, with a new interest.

"And our Washington, when a young man of nineteen, visited it. He took smallpox here and was laid up for three weeks."

A town of stone has always more dignity than a town of wood; it looks as if it had lasted, and would last. The capital of Barbadoes is built of stone. Like other cities in the West Indies, it has many of those little wooden houses set on four legs, which might be taken for some new kind of animal; but its principal streets, though narrow, are well built.

The first visit of the Francis family was to the hotel, where a breakfast was ordered to be ready on their return; then taking a carriage, they drove towards Hastings. The tide was just coming in, Mother had brought bathing suits, and in a few minutes Loys and Halde were splashing about among

the breakers, with a darkey boy companion, whom Mr. Francis employed to look after them.

Barbadians are expert swimmers; it is even said that the black babies learn to swim before they can walk. Percy, as the boy was called, dived, floated, and moved over or under the water at will, swinging his arms, kicking his legs, and butting the waves with his woolly head, as they broke over him; all of which Loys and Halde tried to copy.

As the children had been wishing for a sea bath at every island, they were now so delighted that their father could scarcely get them to come out. At last he said the fun must end, and bidding good-by to Percy, they dressed and climbed into the carriage.

A number of fine estates were passed, and a lovely spot, called Bishops Court, was reached, where bearded banyans grew plentifully amid other fine wood. It is said that these trees gave the island its name; *barba* meaning a beard in Spanish, and certainly nothing could be more striking to a stranger on landing at Barbadoes than these trees.

A mossy wall surrounded the estate, but had fallen down in one place. The boys begged their father to stop the carriage and let them ramble about. The roots of the banyan trees grow all over their limbs, like branches without leaves, and hang to the ground in thick ropes. Loys and Halde made a fine swing by tying the ends of these roots together; or

climbing hand over hand, up one rope and down another, they had a wonderful game of tag.

After the children were tired playing, the drive was continued on to Bridgetown. Here the better class of houses were surrounded with gardens, and even the tiniest cabins had a few feet of ground in front of them filled with green.

Mr. Francis told the story of a jolly crowd of young men who, going home late one night, lifted a hut near the sea off of its posts and dropped it into the water. The people inside thought it was an earthquake and yelled with fright. However, no harm was done, and the owner with the help of a few friends easily set his house again on its legs.

The boys laughed and wanted to try if they could raise one. "We won't throw it down, Father, only lift it a little and set it back easy," explained Halde.

"I am glad of your good intentions, my boy. But you and Loys could never raise such a heavy weight."

"Let us try, anyway," persisted Halde. "There is a wee, wee one over there, just waiting."

Mr. Francis willingly stopped the carriage, and the boys jumped out. Halde went under on all fours, and arched his back against the beams, Loys tugged with his hands: the cabin did not budge.

"Oh, me Fader!" exclaimed a negro woman, look-

ing out of the window. "What dese Buckra boys be doin'?"

"We are trying to push your house over, old lady," answered Halde, cheerfully.

The woman swayed to and fro shouting with laughter, as if this was the best joke ever made in Barbadoes, and the boys, finding their efforts in vain, returned to the carriage.

While sitting at breakfast at the hotel, Loys remarked, "Father, Barbadoes does not appear as if it had been made by volcanoes, like the other islands."

"It is formed of coral, but the coral reef itself has been forced up by an earthquake. I am told that the soil, when seen through a microscope, is full of tiny shells, and in many places you can see the rock itself. I wish we had more time to look about us; a railroad runs through a pretty country to the northwest, where there are beautiful sea cliffs and caves well worth visiting. Now, if you have finished eating, we must be off. The captain intends starting as soon as possible."

The rest of the time was spent on board, watching the negro boys paddle around the vessel. These lively little sailors use their skill in swimming to dive for the pennies that passengers throw into the water for them.

Sometimes two would be in a roughly made boat just large enough to hold them and very leaky as

well. One had to bail constantly, in order to keep the frail craft afloat, while his companion looked for the money. Others, more ambitious and having a better boat, formed a partnership of three; one rowed, one played the flageolet to attract attention, and the third was diver for the company.

It was seldom that a penny escaped them. They would watch the splash when it struck the water, and diving under the coin, would let it drop into their hands. Then up to the surface they would come, holding the prize between their teeth, and ready for another.

Among the divers was Percy, the children's late companion of the bath, who, as the vessel left, shouted out: "Good-by, Loys and Halde! Good-by!"

CHAPTER XXXVII

OTHER ISLANDS

PASSING St. Vincent to the west, they reached the island of St. Lucia, eleven hours after leaving Barbadoes.

Castries, the capital, where they dropped anchor, is built around a snug little bay like that of Grenada. The steamer lay close to the wharf, making it easy to go on shore; but the captain was anxious to make up for lost time and told the family he would remain there only an hour.

"We can take a little walk, however, and I will show you trees catching oysters," said Mr. Francis to the boys, who had wanted to drive over the beautiful hills of the island.

"How can trees catch oysters?" asked Loys, doubtfully.

"Look at the mangroves along the shore; their long high roots make them appear as if standing on stilts. It is on these that the oysters fasten themselves when the tide is in; and when it ebbs they are easily picked off."

"What clever trees!" exclaimed Halde, at which they all laughed.

"St. Lucia is known for a very poisonous snake, called fer-de-lance," continued Mr. Francis, as they strolled towards a small park behind the town. "Mr. Des Vœux, a friend of mine, told me that when he was governor here he tried to rid the island of these dangerous snakes and offered sixpence for each head brought to him. Such quantities came in that he feared the treasury would be depleted and had to reduce the price to threepence."

After visiting the park, they went to the market, where Mrs. Francis bought some fine white grapes, "real grapes," Halde called them, which grow well in this island. The boys now had occasion to use the few words of French they had learned at school; for St. Lucia belonged to France before it was taken by England, and the natives still speak the French language.

The hour was soon up, and it was yet early morning when the vessel steamed away. Four hours more brought them in sight of Martinique, the ill-fated island, which on May 8, 1902, was the scene of a volcanic eruption that caused a great loss of life and property.

"How desolate it looks!" exclaimed Mrs. Francis, as the destroyed city of St. Pierre came into view.

A mass of ruins rose from the blue waters of the

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OUT FOR A WALK

The Children and their Nurses live in Castries, St. Lucia

bay, up towards the purple hilltops. No cross-streets could be seen, only layer after layer of deserted houses. The family watched the sad sight with heavy hearts until the island grew dim in the distance.

"Islands are as plentiful as in 'Sindbad the Sailor,'" said Loys the next day at dawn when his father wakened him to have a peep at Dominica.

"Are there any wild islands still out here?" asked Halde, rubbing his sleepy eyes with his fists and joining his brother at the port-hole.

"Those of any size have been settled, but some little places, I am told, have only a single man for a population. A hut furnished with an American rocking-chair, a stew-pan, a gun, and a hammock forms his country-seat, town house, governor's residence, jail, public buildings, law-courts, and capital city — all in one."

"I wonder if we could buy an island and live on it?" asked Loys.

"I daresay it would be possible; Barbuda is owned by a gentleman who has made a fine estate of it. However, I think we had better not try. You remember Sancho Panza did not find the experience of governing an island any too pleasant, and Robinson was glad to leave his the first chance he got."

"Dominica looks like a big plum cake," interrupted Halde, who was not unlike Sancho in his fondness for good things to eat. "I wish it *were*

a plum cake," he added after a short pause. "Loys and I would then take a pickaxe and dig tunnels in it."

"I'm afraid, Halde, that it is baked too hard. No island of the West Indies shows the effects of fire more than this one. The lava flowing from the hilltops burst in cooling and left those seams and furrows that resemble the crust of a cake. This is the land Columbus first touched on his second voyage, on Sunday, November 3, 1493, and he named it after the day: *Domenica* meaning Sunday in Italian."

"Will we have time to drive about the island?"

"Our vessel does not stop here this trip. But we run so near alongshore that it is almost like being there, without the fatigue of landing."

"Can you show us, Father, the place where Columbus landed?"

"It is not in this part of the island. He reached Dominica from the Atlantic side, and we are now in the Caribbean Sea."

By this time the boys were dressed, and hurried out when their mother called them to the rail. "Here is just the place to surprise a mermaid," she said, pointing to the blue water below.

The sun pierced the sea to the very bottom with a light that seemed as if shining through ground glass. Coral in masses made a strange sea-garden

The Ruined City of Martinique

through which little black fishes rushed about in fright as the shadow of the vessel fell upon them.

"Oh, how lovely!" exclaimed Halde. "Do you really think, Mother, that we may see a mermaid?"

"Not if you look carefully, my boy," answered Mrs. Francis, with a smile. "Stories of mermaids, sea-serpents, and other such fantastic creatures came from travelers who did not know how to use their eyes."

Loys then proposed that they catch some of the little black fishes swimming about the vessel, and he and his brother ran off to beg a line from the mate. Tempting bits of bacon were put on the hooks and the lines were trailed in the water, but the sensible little fishes were content with their pretty home in the sea and would not take the bait.

When evening set in, another island was reached.

"Boys, look well at that island, it is Montserrat," called Mr. Francis. "What would you think of a people who live from lime juice?"

"I think they would be very sour," observed Halde.

"Isn't it odd that sugar and limes should thrive so well on the same soil," remarked Mrs. Francis, as she saw acre upon acre of cane fields bordered by mile upon mile of lime plantations.

"You see, Mother," explained Halde, "the limes must have sugar in order to make lemonade."

"It is not so much for lemonade as for bread and butter that the people plant them," answered his father. "Montserrat has become prosperous by the sale of lime-juice. The cargo of that vessel in the harbor will be nothing but barrels of the juice. In one year they sent away a hundred and sixty thousand gallons; and one company alone owns two hundred thousand lime trees in full bearing."

"It ought to be called Lemonade Island," suggested Halde. "I wish we could go on shore for a glass."

"The captain has no cargo for this place. However, to-morrow you will be able to run about on another island." Mr. Francis referred to Antigua, which was reached in the morning.

The *Barracouta* lay more than two miles from the town of St. John. "Why don't we anchor nearer the city?" asked Mrs. Francis of the captain.

"On account of pirates," was the answer.

The boys opened their eyes wide with wonder. "Are there really pirates still here?" asked Loys, much interested.

"Not in these days, but at the time St. John was built there were plenty of pirate ships throughout the Caribbean Sea. The bold pirates, not satisfied with plundering ships, would attack the towns along the coast and rob the people. For this reason St. John was placed far back in the bay, where a coral

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A Sugar Plantation

The Negro Woman is carrying upon her Head a Bundle of Ferns, which she will use for Fuel

reef prevents any one from landing except in small boats."

The visit to Antigua was a short one. What delighted the family most was the long row to and from the island, with a negro crew singing "chanties," or boat songs, to the beat of their dripping oars.

Next, the rugged mountains of Nevis appeared in view as the *Barracouta* steamed westward. Then came St. Kitts, with its fields of cane, thick-growing and soft-looking like the fur of an animal.

"That is a volcano," said Mr. Francis, pointing to the sombre mass of Mt. Misery, half-hidden in the clouds.

"Does it ever spout?" asked Halde.

"No, it is a fairly well-behaved volcano, though it has a deep crater that still smokes and smells of sulphur."

"St. Kitts Columbus named after himself," Loys remarked; "he found it on his second voyage. I read that in a book, and the mate told me the woods are full of monkeys."

"That is quite a lot of information, Loys," answered Mrs. Francis. "Columbus certainly chose a very pretty island for his namesake; and the sparkling sea, the fertile land, and bright sun, with Mt. Misery in the background, seem like a picture of his own varied life."

Basseterre, as the capital of St. Kitts is called, is a

modest little town of only a few streets. A square surrounded by palms and a public garden half covered by the wide-spreading limbs of a banyan tree are its only pretentions to beauty.

"Let us walk to the market," said Mr. Francis, after the family had strolled about the town. "I always like to see what people eat; for you will generally find that the wiser we grow, the more care we take in feeding ourselves."

"That is an easy way to be wise," returned Halde. "If you give me some money, I will show you how wise I can be."

"Perhaps, Halde, you will only show us what a greedy boy you are."

The market was nothing more than a low shed, under the shade of which a row of black women were sitting on the ground with piles of fruit and vegetables around them. Loys bought an avocado pear, while Halde struck a bargain for a huge bunch of fig-bananas, nearly as big as himself, and which his father had to carry for him.

After a look at the church, where the boys climbed the belfry, the family went to breakfast at a little hotel with seemingly no entrance to it. Finally, a chance opening in the fence brought them to the house, where the host, a nice old colored man, explained that he was making improvements and would soon have a front door added to the place.

NEGRO WOMEN ON THEIR WAY TO MARKET, ST. KITTS

While eating breakfast, Mr. Francis sent for a carriage, as they had still about an hour to spare before going back to the vessel. A beautiful drive to Frigate Bay ended their visit. The boys were greatly pleased with some white peacocks they saw there, and their mother admired the wide fields of arrowroot that tinted the countryside with every shade of green.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

BYWATER

"ONE more island and then home," remarked Mr. Francis, when the steamer began again to puff forward.

"There are plenty of others on the map, Father," returned Loys. "Won't we see St. Domingo, Cuba, and Jamaica?"

"Not on this trip; our vessel does not go so far west."

"What is that one over there?" asked Mother, presently.

"St. Eustatius; it belongs to the Dutch."

"The little islands must feel very lonely when the steamer goes by without stopping," remarked Halde.

"Not as lonely as when they were not found at all," answered Loys. "Anyway, they can see the ships passing."

"How can they see without eyes?"

"Neither can they feel, for that matter. Islands are not animals."

"What are they?"

"Islands!"

"Boys, it seems to me you are discussing a very foolish subject, and had better end it," said their mother, reprovingly.

"All the same I pity the little islands," added Halde, wishing to have the last word.

Before bedtime Mr. Francis pointed out Saba, a great rock standing like a fort in the sea, and so steep that the people who live there have had to cut steps in the cliff in order to reach their homes.

Next morning they landed at Santa Cruz and prepared for a long drive across the island. Here they heard Danish spoken for the first time. But though the place belongs to Denmark, the planters are mostly Irish, and they, as well as the negro laborers, speak English.

The first pleasant surprise the family had was the endurance of the meagre little horses harnessed to their carriage. Mother said they looked as if changed from mice, like those of Cinderella; however, no one could find fault with the way they did their work, scampering up and down hill through the long hot day.

The roads were wide and bordered on either side by low mossy walls overrun with vines. There was scarcely a level mile, but the hills were neither as high nor as steep as in most of the places they had visited. Fields of waving cane covered the land like a sea of green. Here and there oxen, guided by

black men, were ploughing furrows in the deep, rich earth. Comfortable dwellings and large factories dotted the landscape, and windmills tossed their long arms before the breeze. Many of these are used to force the cane juice through pipes to factories at a distance.

About halfway across the island Loys pointed to a handsome house without a roof. There were no marks of fire about it, and the walls looked as though they had been built for some time. People were evidently living there, and Loys asked the driver why they had not finished the top.

"Dat same house be finish too long," was the reply.

"But it has no roof."

"She did gone, long time now."

"Why did they take it away?"

"*They* no take she away, big hurricane take she away, lif' she right off. People no put roof any more jest for dem hurricanes to puff she off."

"Do you think a hurricane really did it, Father?"

"Certainly. You remember Captain Stout telling you of the great force of the wind. This is a hurricane region, and a number of these islands lie in their track. Earthquakes, too, are felt here. Not tiny shakes, like those we had in British Guiana, but fearful jolts and shiverings that break mountains, split valleys, and turn towns into heaps of ruins.

Tidal waves follow — enormous walls of moving water that sweep everything before them — and are even more dangerous than the earthquakes."

At the end of the drive was the quaint little town of Bassin, clustered in a half circle around the bay, where a reef made a tumbling row of white foam separating the blue sea from the blue sky. The houses were tinted pink and yellow, and the weather-stained walls, the stone archways, the courtyards, balconies, and outside stairways added to the place a certain air of old Europe.

After climbing around streets until weary, the family went to take lunch; not at a hotel, this time, but to a comfortable old residence, where the landlady herself entertained them, and her daughter played pretty Spanish waltzes for them on the piano.

Towards evening they drove back, dipping down into the night as the road ran along the valleys, rising into twilight when halfway up the mountains, and trotting into full daylight on the top.

Finally the sun set. The road was black and scarcely to be seen, yet the little ponies trotted gayly on. By the time the last hill was left behind, the town of West End could be seen all a-twinkle with welcome lights, among which the red and green eyes of the ships at anchor stared from the bay.

A good supper, eaten with an appetite sharpened

by their thirty miles' drive, ended the family's visit to Santa Cruz. A short row in the moonlight brought them to the vessel, and soon after the prow of the *Barracouta* was pointed straight for home.

Next morning they passed between the islands of Porto Rico and St. Thomas, into the Atlantic Ocean. A storm that followed up from behind burst over the steamer; and now was seen the difference between sails and steam. Wind or no wind, the steamer pushed forward; the calmer the weather, the faster the speed. Where the *Potomac* would have been drifting unable to steer, the *Barracouta* covered nearly three hundred miles a day.

Yet it was pleasant to remember those quiet days on the *Potomac*, when, with every white sail set, she rose and fell on the tossing waves as softly as a sleeping bird. The *Barracouta*, on the contrary, seemed always to be fighting her way; she did not ride the waves, but ploughed through the water, which split before her as if hurt. Then, too, she shook and panted; she was always noisy and often dusty. However, to all these objections Mother would answer with a happy smile, "She goes fast."

The tropics were soon left behind, the bulging earth now hid the Southern Cross, and the North Star stood higher each night.

Only six days more remained, and New York would be reached. All the talk was of home; and to hear

the children, no one would think they had ever been anxious to leave it.

"We have real winter there, with sleighing and skating," said Loys.

"And can run about all day in the sun and not get the least bit of fever," added Halde.

"There are no bêtes-rouges in the grass."

"We can walk in the woods, there is no bush-rope to tangle it up, and no camoudis to bite us."

"And oh, Halde! It is lovely to climb the apple trees in the orchard, and also to pick cherries and peaches. I like them far better than mangoes."

"One plant you have forgotten, the fruit of which always grows best at home," said Mother.

"What is that?" exclaimed both children together.

"Love!"

"Oh, no, we have not forgotten dear Grandmother and Grandfather."

"And Auntie and uncles. They will not think us such little boys now," said Halde, who in spite of his boast was very small for his age.

But recalling is not equal to seeing. Long before they came to the green shore water of New York bay, the number of vessels coming and going showed that some great harbor was near. The many flags, rigs, and hulls, the slow-sailing ships, the rushing steamers; all were on their way to bid good morning to the new world. Then the pert little pilot-boats

and the various shore craft were met, and at last the welcome cry of "Land!" was shouted from the masthead.

"*Our* country, Halde," said Loys, pointing with pride to the strip of coast in the distance.

"Yes," returned Halde, "and look at the different flags, ours is the prettiest."

The vessel steamed past Sandy Hook, up into the calm, wide inner bay. One can well imagine the *Barracouta*, after her experiences with the wash-basin kind of harbors of the West Indies, saying to herself between puffing and wheezing, "Now this is what I call comfort, no fear of bumping into each other here!"

The boys' excitement increased with every city they passed: Brooklyn, where they landed, and New York, where they stayed over night. The houses forming endless streets, the still more endless noise and bustle, the elevated road rattling overhead, the cars, the hacks, vans, carriages, and omnibuses below, the shop windows filled with beautiful or useful objects,—all made the brothers open their eyes with wonder, and at each new surprise Loys did not forget to repeat, "This is our country, Halde!"

But perhaps the greatest wonder to the boys was the number of people they saw. "I never knew there was so many people in the world," whispered Halde.

Bywater

"To where are they all going, Father?" inquired Loys.

"Each has some different end in view."

"There must be a great many ends in New York."

"Yes, and beginnings, too. We, also, have found an end here."

"Not quite," said Mother; "to-morrow."

To-morrow came. The day began with an early drive down to a ferry that brought them to the railroad station. A swift train was taken, and in a short time they reached Philadelphia, where they stopped to change cars. Then, on again they rushed, until towards evening the hills and fields began to have a familiar look.

"We are near Bywater," whispered Mother.

"There is the river, I remember it well," said Loys.

"And the canal and tow-path, and the same old mules," exclaimed Halde.

"And the smoky furnaces," continued Loys.

Almost before they knew it the cars stopped, and the conductor shouted, "Bywater!"

Who can truly describe a welcome home! The kisses and warm hugs, the questions without answers and answers unheard because everybody is talking at once. Mother's eyes were dim; but this time from joy.

A few steps brought them to the house, where Grandmother and Grandfather stood on the porch,

their dear faces shining with love. More kisses, sweet words, and embraces followed; even Snap came in for a share of caresses after Halde had introduced him to all.

Then came supper for the tired travelers, where every one found just what he or she liked best — among other dainties those square brown waffles, with holes for butter and sugar mixed with cinnamon, that the boys delighted in. When the very pattern of the table-linen, a design of harps, flutes, and laurel wreaths, the familiar china, and even a tiny dent in one side of the coffee-pot that had been there so long it thought itself a part of the service, — all seemed saying: "Welcome home! Welcome home!" The big sideboard tried to look jolly, and the old clock had its full moon showing in honor of the company, though it was a dark night outside. Even the men who brought the trunks shook hands, and the servants were glad with the rest.

No wonder Mother, later, when seated between her parents, one hand of each in hers, said, "The best part of going away is coming back."

"Grandmother," whispered Loys, as he kissed her good night, "this is the best country we have seen."

"And you and Grandfather are the best people," added Halde, who was cuddled, half-asleep, in his grandfather's lap.

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